THE HOME OF QUALITY BUS PHOTOGRAPHY

Bus&Coach PRESERVATION

ONE-MAN TITAN

HALEWOOD 192
Belle Vale, Huyton
Page Moss, Knowsley
ANDY
Liverbus
L211 SBG

Liverbird!

LIVERBUS OLYMPIAN BACK ON HOME GROUND

FROM BANKING TO BUSES

679 Hinckley

MIDLAND RED FLIGHT OF FANCY

251 SOUTHEND
CityBus

CANVEY 90 CELEBRATED

+ NEWS, VIEWS, EVENT DATES AND SO MUCH MORE INSIDE!

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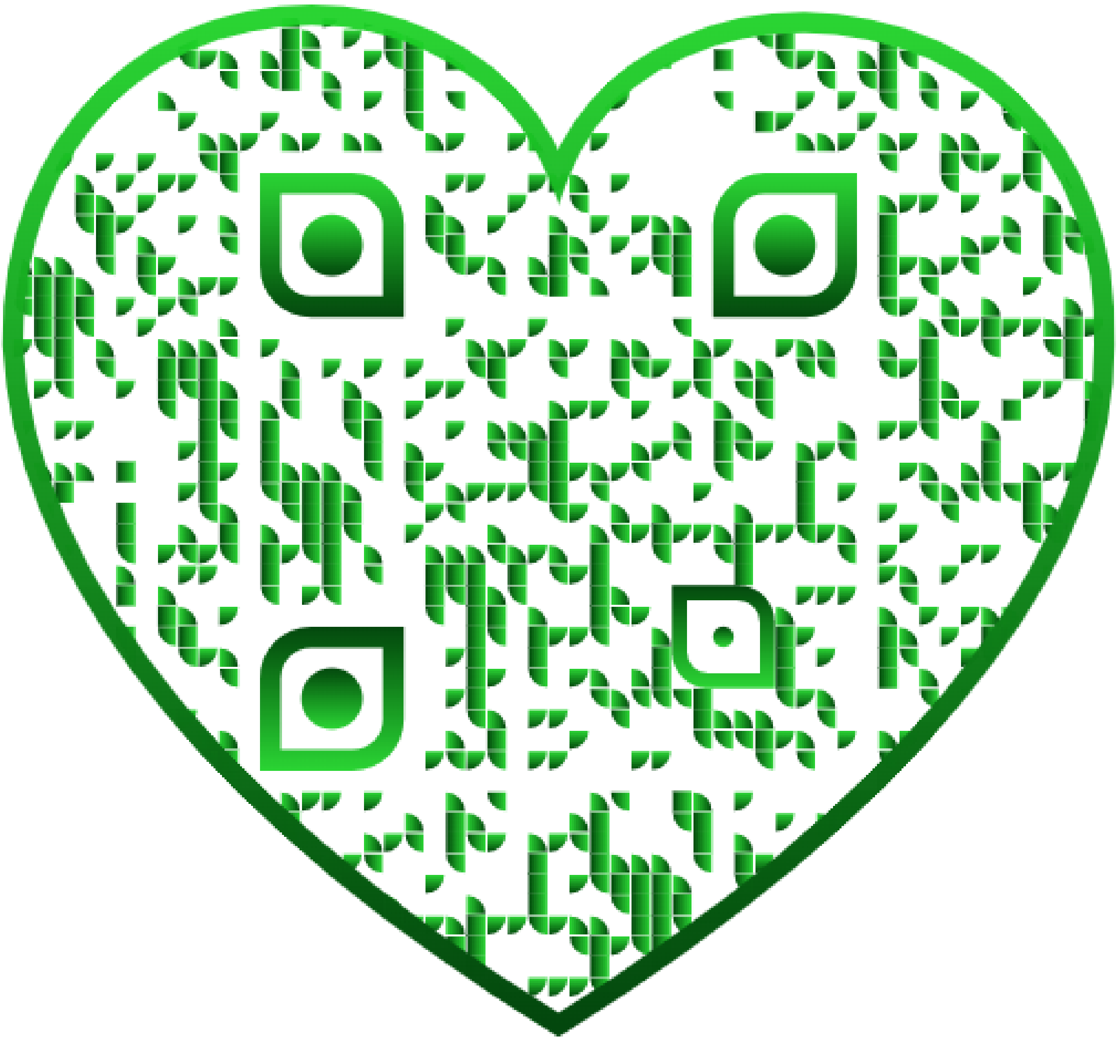

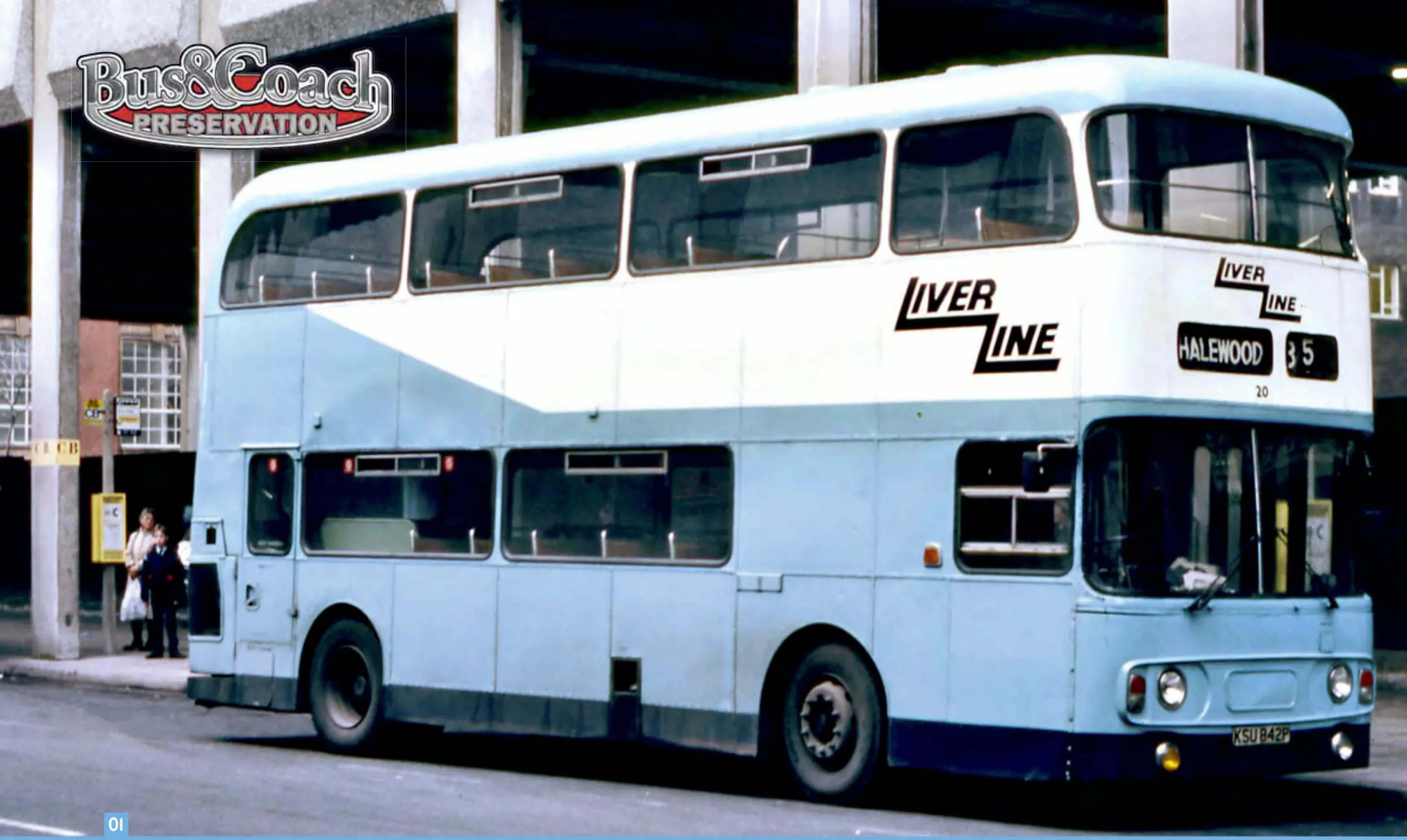
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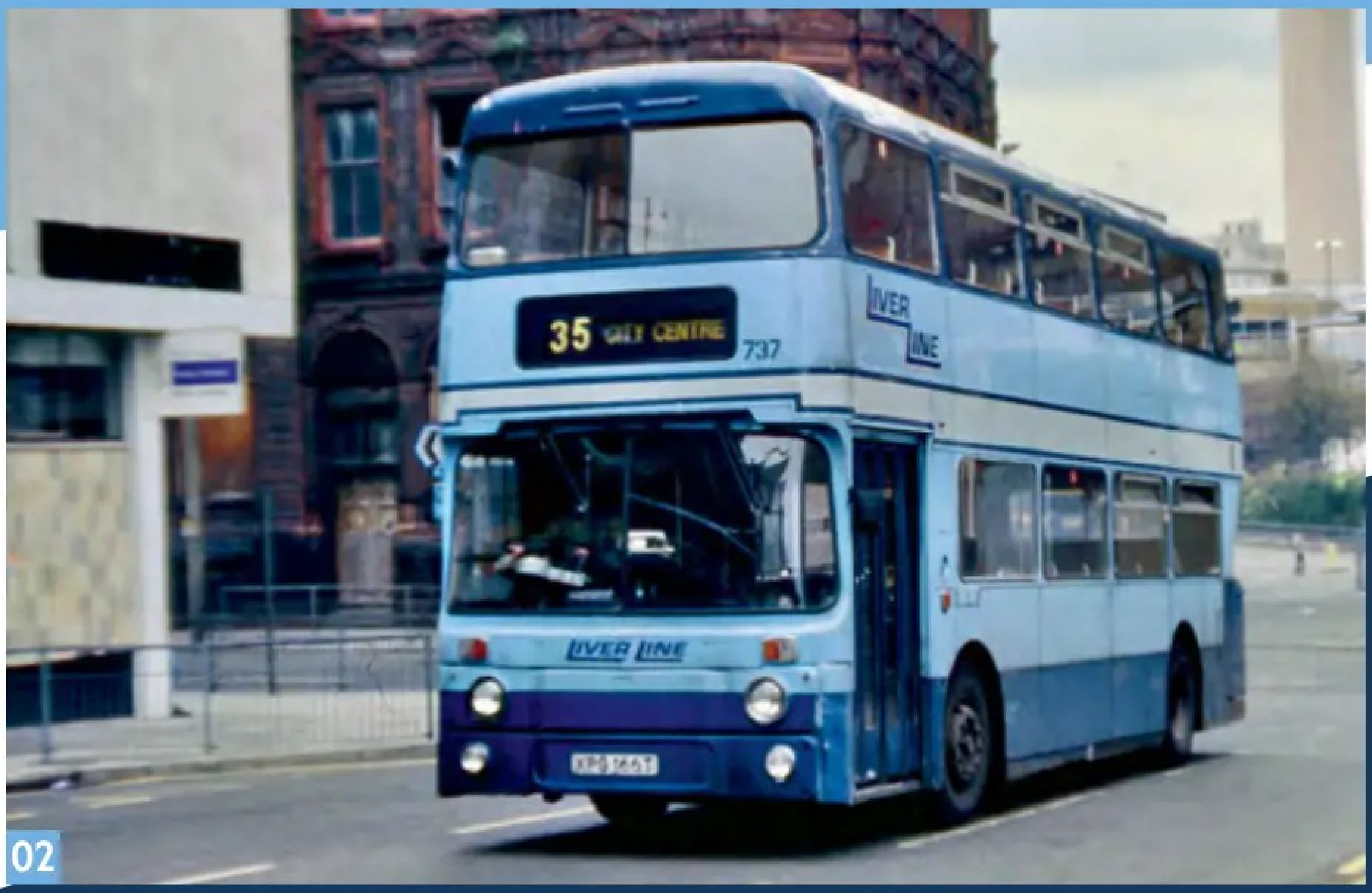
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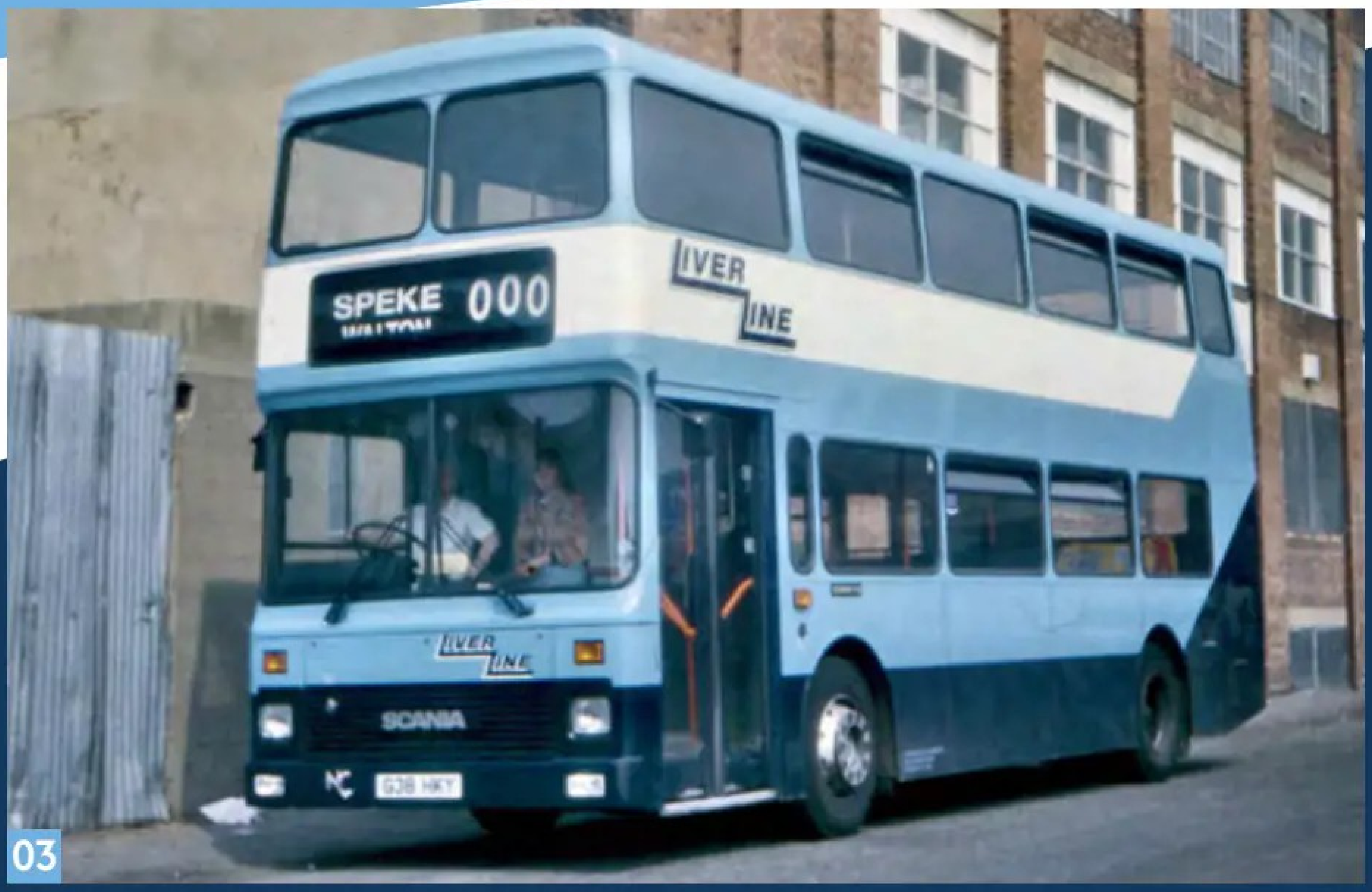
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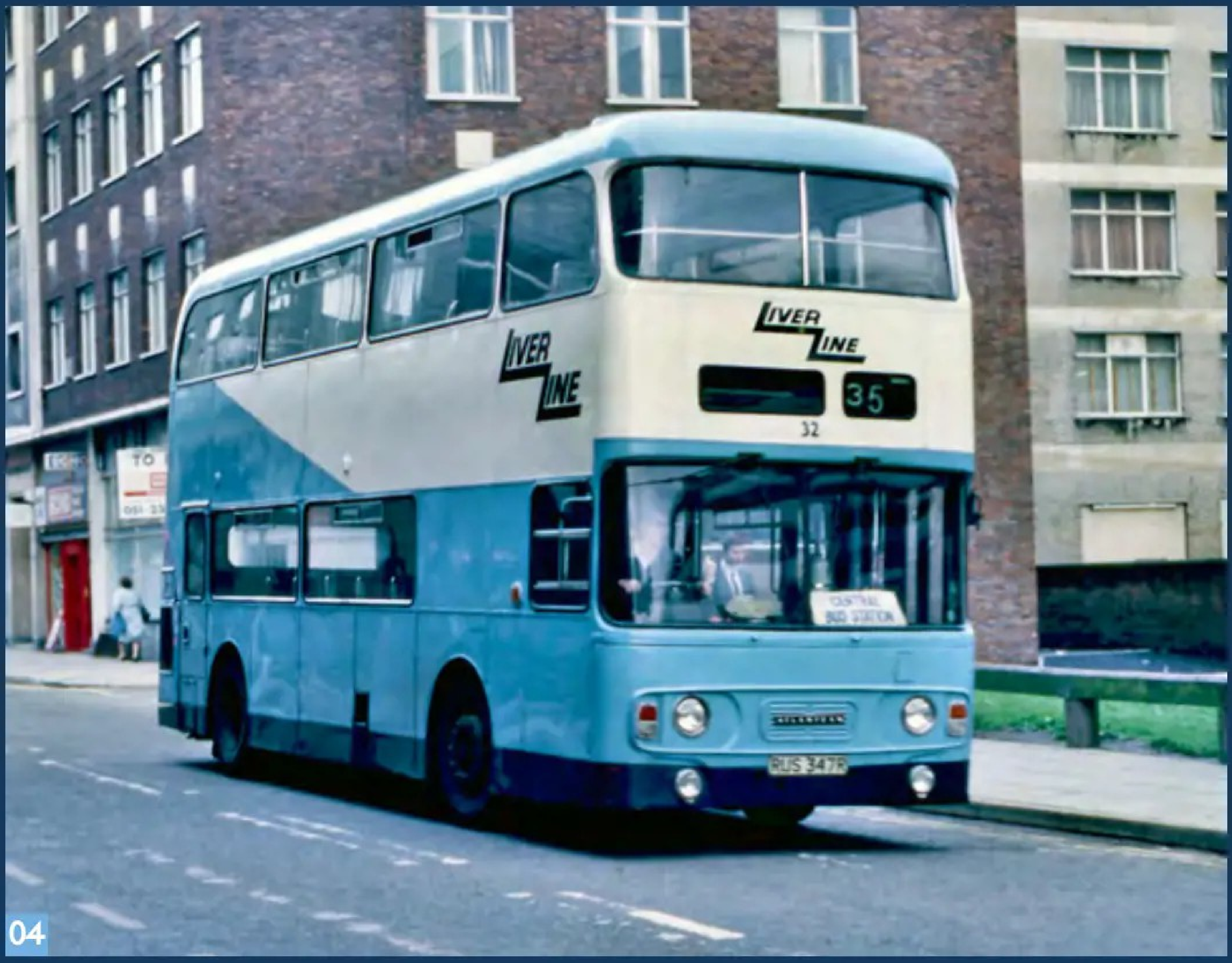
03

Liverline began operation in Spring 1988. The initial fleet consisted of ex-Strathclyde Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans from a couple of sources. More Atlanteans, ex-Greater Manchester, Plymouth, Ribble and Hyndburn replaced some of these in 1989, with Liverline's first new vehicles, 10 Scania 113/Northern Counties Palatines joining the fleet at that time.

Drawlane took over Liverline in 1993, merging it with North Western and another Liverpool independent, Amberline. In 1998, Drawlane, by then trading as British Bus became Arriva with Liverline otherwise remaining fairly intact until 1998 when the Arriva corporate identity started to spread.

By April 2000, the Liverline Atlanteans were long-gone and the Scanias transferred to Fox County, exchanged for similarly aged Alexander- and Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Olympians, whilst most former Liverline services were either withdrawn or merged into the Arriva network.


LIVER LINE
LIVER LINE
35
32
CENTRAL BUS STATION

04

Pictures: PRESBUS ARCHIVE

Vol 27 No.8 January 2025

Contents

06 **NEWS PLUS**
The latest from the world of bus preservation

10 **CARDIFF CROSSLEY TWICE PRESERVED**
On Monday 26 February 2024, Cardiff 46 (EBO 900), an Alexander-bodied Crossley DD42/7, new in June 1949, and thought to be the first Welsh bus to be preserved, took up residence at The Bus Depot, Barry. GLYN BOWEN reports.

12 **LIVERBIRD!**
TERRY MORRIS tells the story of now preserved Liverbus 211 (L211 SBG), a Northern Counties Palatine II-bodied Volvo Olympian.

16 **OUT TO GRASS**
Another selection of buses and coaches past their 'sell-by date'

18 **ON THE ROAD**
DAVID JUKES presents this month's selection of active older service and preserved buses:

22 **AFTER THEY WERE FAMOUS: RECOVERY!**
This month we bring you a selection of buses and coaches converted into recovery trucks.

24 **PD PIONEER**
Brighton Corporation 23 (23 ACD), a 1962 Weymann-bodied Leyland Titan PD2/37, was the UK's first one-person-operated double-deck service bus. DAVID JUKES find out more.

28 **RETURN JOURNEY: BRIGHTON BLUE**
We take a journey through the years when Brighton's buses turned blue.

32 **CANVEY 90**
JOHN G. LIDSTONE marks Canvey Depot's 'Birthday Bash'.

36 **IN THE TWILIGHT IN KIRKBY**
We visit the NWVRT's twilight event again this year.

38 **COACHING CLASSICS:**
We celebrate 85 years since the first examples took to the roads and the announcement by EFE Road of a revamped version of its 1/76th scale model of this all-time classic British coach.

44 **FROM BANKING TO BUSES**
ASHLEY BLACKMAN has dinner with BOB STANGER in York to learn about his passion for London Transport and how he went from a corporate job in banking to his dream of driving buses.

48 **A PERSONAL RECREATION**
SIMON GILL catches up with Karl Brailsford following the launch of his newly repainted former Crosville Leyland Olympian, B190 BLG, which was unveiled at the Transport Museum Wythall during the Midland Red 120 event on 6 October 2024.

52 **RETURN JOURNEY: THE EARLY OLYMPIANS**
Leyland introduced the Olympian in 1981 It proved to be a major success with almost all NBC subsidiaries taking the newcomer into their fleets.

TOURS (ISLE OF MAN)
TOURS ISLE OF MAN
DOUGLAS

54 **THE MODEL PAGE: BEDFORD OB RECAST**
JOHN G. LIDSTONE previews EFE Road's revamped Bedford OB.

58 **OFF ROUTE**
Tributes to Metro-Cammell and remembering the last of the Routemasters now 20 years ago.

65/1 **BUSMART**
B&CP's comprehensive advertising section, where you can buy or sell any bus-related item.

01 Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean with Panoramic Windows KSU 842P had been new to Greater Glasgow, later Strathclyde PTE in 1975. It arrived in Liverpool via London Country South East/Kentish Bus.

02 XPG 166T came from London Country North West in 1992. It was a 1978 Park Royal-bodied Leyland Atlantean, which was sold on to Edwards of Pontypridd in 1997.

03 No 105 (G38 HKY) was one of 10 1989 Northern Counties Palatine-bodied Scania N113s. These were Liverline's only new double-deckers, the batch later being transferred to Arriva Fox County.

04 New in 1977 RUS 347R was another former Greater Glasgow/Strathclyde PTE Leyland Atlantean, arriving via Rennies, which had acquired several for onward sale.

COVER: Liverbus was founded in January 1990 and it operated 43 buses from its Huyton depot when it was acquired by employee-owned MTL Trust Holdings in April 1995. Its Palatine 2-bodied Volvo Olympian, L211 SBG has been restored and now represents a superb example of a bus from the deregulation era. See the full story on page 12. **PHILIP LAMB**

The REVIVIST

BY ASHLEY BLACKMAN

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EDITOR:
Philip Lamb 07887 883 421
busandcoachpreservation@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Ashley Blackman info@ashleyblackman.co.uk
Simon Gill simongill217@gmail.com
David Jukes david.n.jukes@btinternet.com
Nick Larkin nicklarkin721@btinternet.com
John G. Lidstone thamesview@hotmail.com

DESIGN AND LAYOUT:
Mark Grafton housegrafton@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION/READERS' ADS/ TRADE ADVERTISING SALES:
Sandra Lamb 07887 883 421
meteorbooks991@outlook.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE:
Webscribe Ltd 01442 820580
bcp@webscribe.co.uk

WRITE TO:
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ISSN 1462 1886

JBW 527D
THE BOG

Picture: **PHILIP LAMB**

Hoorah for the coach!

Well, that's another year gone. They pass by at an increasingly alarming rate these days. Over the last 25 years or so, a lot has changed in the world of bus preservation. As with you I suspect, many of the people I knew back then are no longer with us, fallen by the wayside as we have slipped, almost without noticing, into what often seems to be alien world, unrecognisable to a great degree by any standard.

Looking back the bus preservation scene has changed entirely. Rallies in the closing years of the last Millenium were still largely attended by half-cab double-deckers along with a selection of saloons with only a few coaches. Interest in coaches back then did not extend much beyond the admiration of the inevitable line-up of Bedford OBs, most of which were around 50 years old. Twenty-five years on most of this cohort still exists with many gathering dust in barns and other gloomy spaces. More recently that interest has, thankfully, spread to other 'coaching classics' but not to any great extent. Coaches are still today seen as a minority interest, especially to those for whom the double-decker, especially a red one, still reigns supreme.

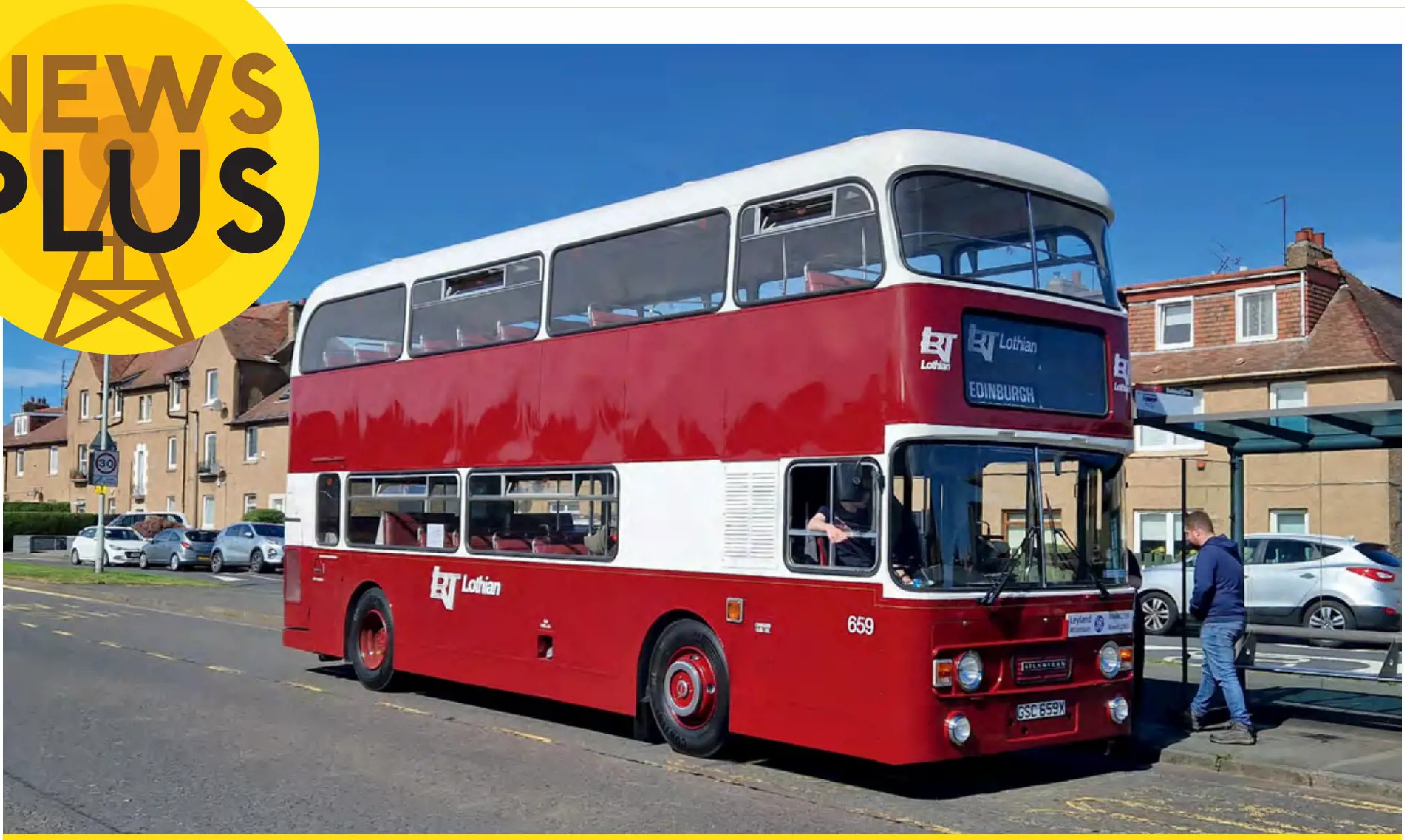
As a small boy growing up in the 1960s, your Editor had exhausted his interest in the local bus scene, witnessed day-in-day-out on his way to and from school. Instead he turned his attention to both the local coaching scene, and to the myriad of visiting coaches found in and around the seaside resort of Southsea.

They came in droves: express coaches and their reliefs, often 'wombled' from small operators native to the district from which the services had originated, the touring coaches which were often to be found outside the better seafront hotels, the coaches working regular services from all over London and the excursions and private hires crammed into Clarence Pier Coach Park. On a Sunday they were also 'on display' on the Common, in fact in any space where you could squeeze a coach.

Arriving at Victoria Coach Station on family trips to London, well. I could have stayed there all day as the columns of coaches belonging to East Kent, Southdown etc shuffled slowly forward peeling off as they reached pole position. All just distant memories now.

But despite the continued preponderance of the OB, coaches from this era remain thin on the ground. Later generations are better represented, but there are still big gaps. Take for example the Weymann Fanfare, extremely popular with BET operators but only two survive and what about all those lightweight Bedfords? Admittedly you would not have seen many at VCS, but Clarence Pier coach park was rammed full of them!

PHILIP LAMB



THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF BUS PRESERVATION…

Last Lothian Leyland

On 3 January 2000, the last Lothian Leyland Atlantean, No 659 (GSC 659X), to run in service has been restored. Following withdrawal No 659 was sold to Houston Ramm in Rochdale and then on to Thomas of Porth, which operated it and others from the same batch on school services in South Wales for four years.

In 2004, it was sold to the Crazy Fire Engine company in Glasgow, with the intention of converting it to an adult entertainment bus. However, this conversion had only just begun when the project fell through.

In 2005, Graham Cochrane and Calum Melrose secured the bus for preservation. What followed has been a long 19-year journey to restore the bus to 1996 condition, including full body and mechanical overhauls.

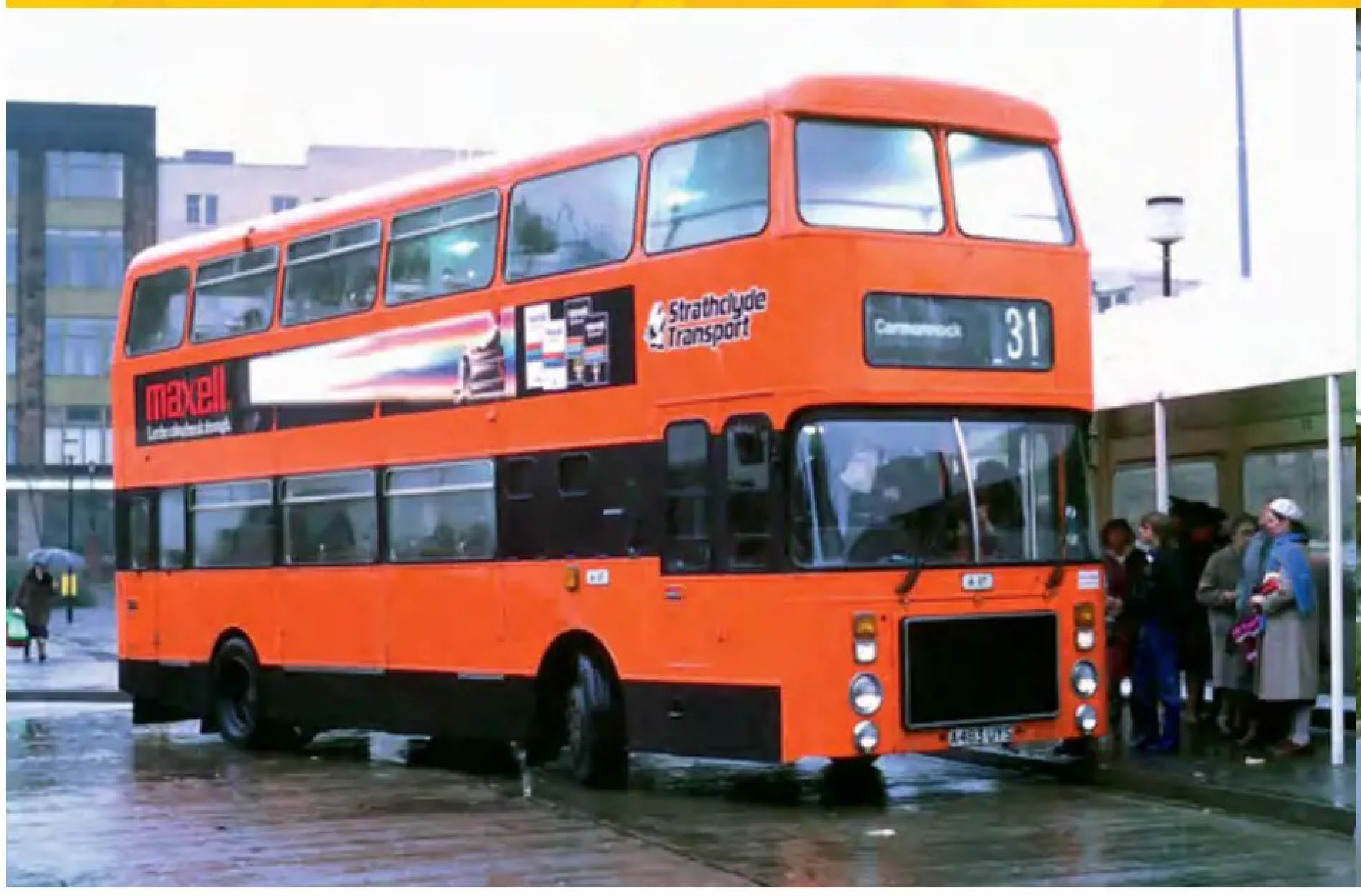
In 2024, the bus attended various events in and around Edinburgh. The owners plan to take it to more events in 2025 and beyond.

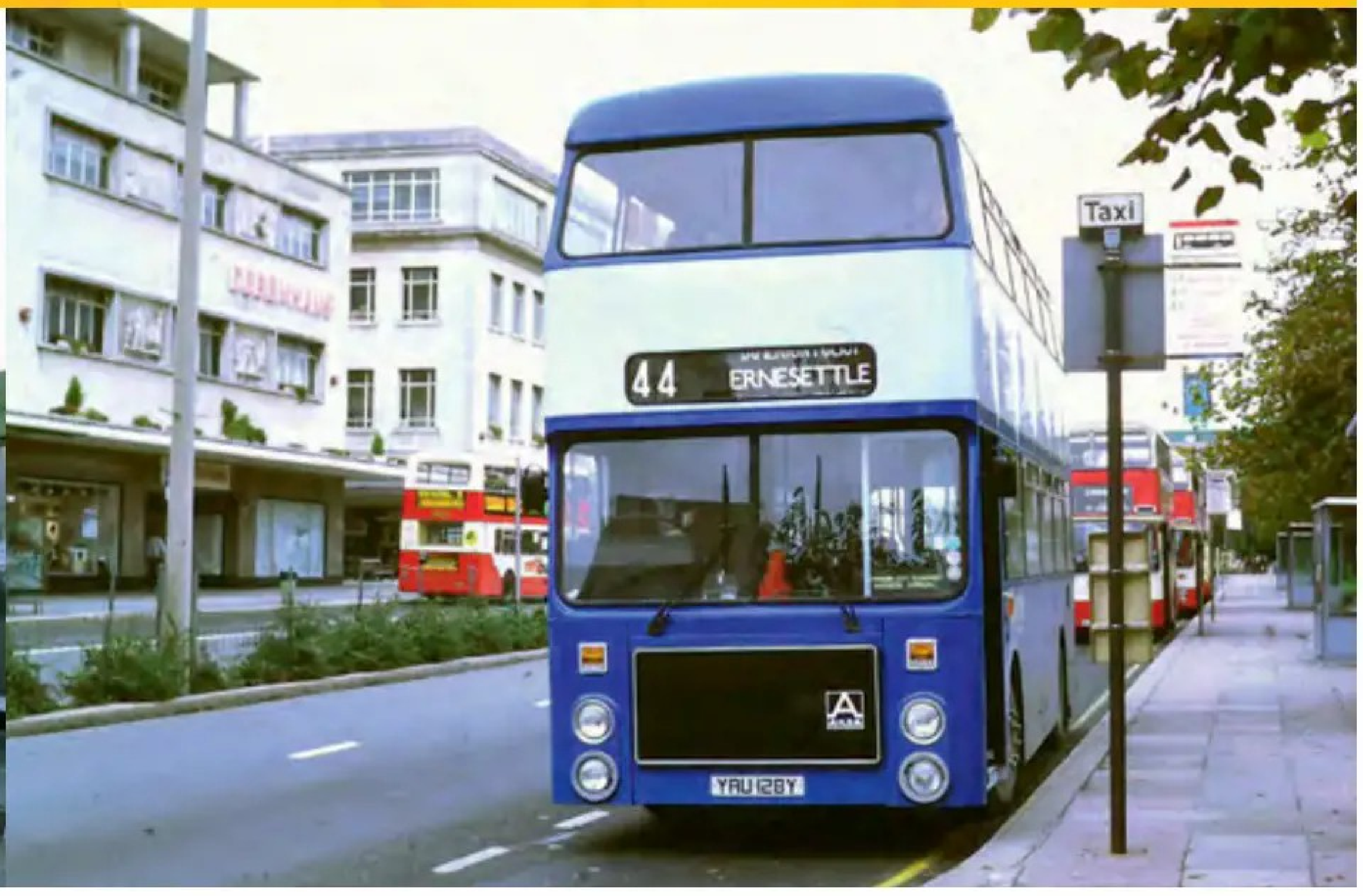
Look out for the full story, coming to these pages soon!

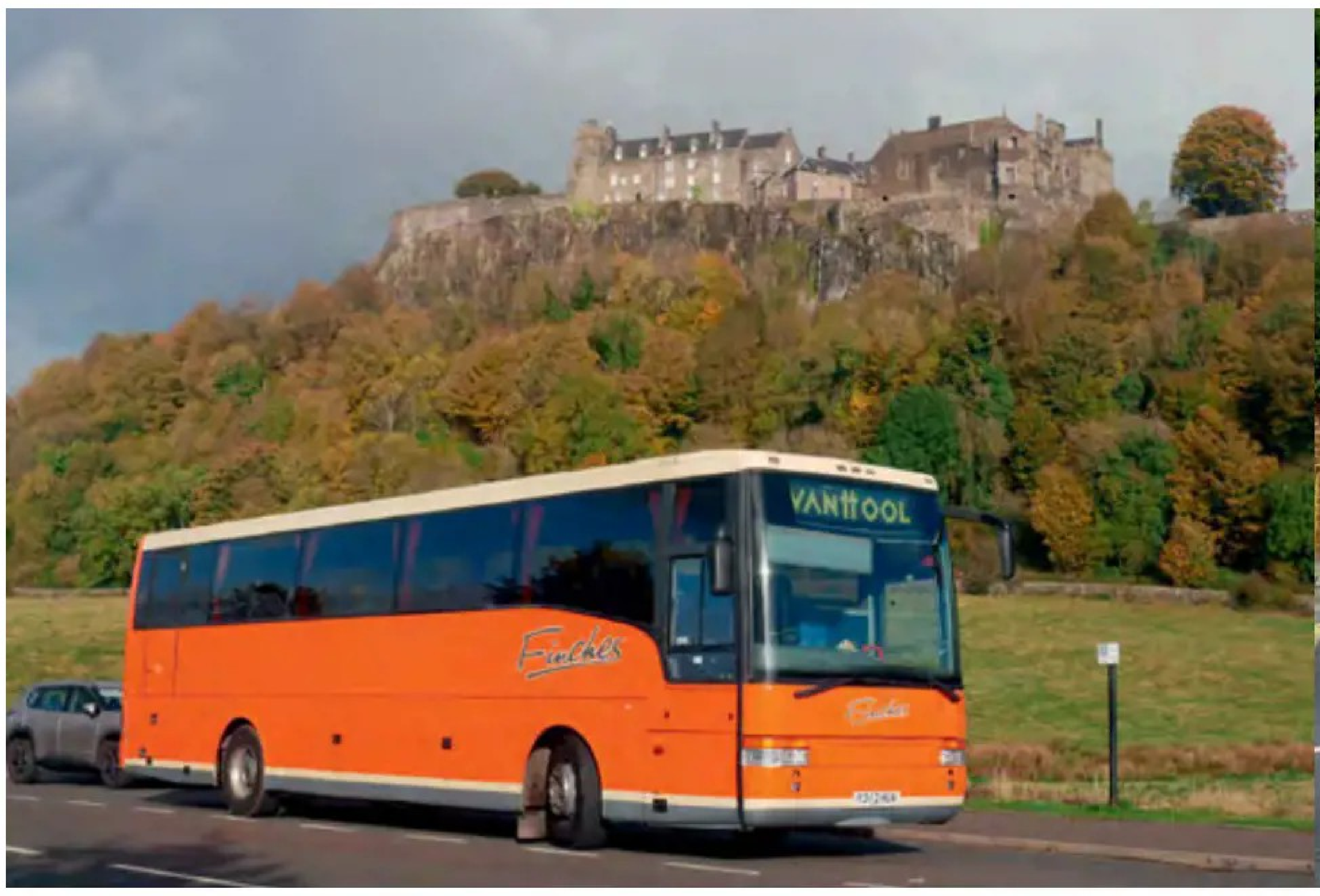
More Marshalls

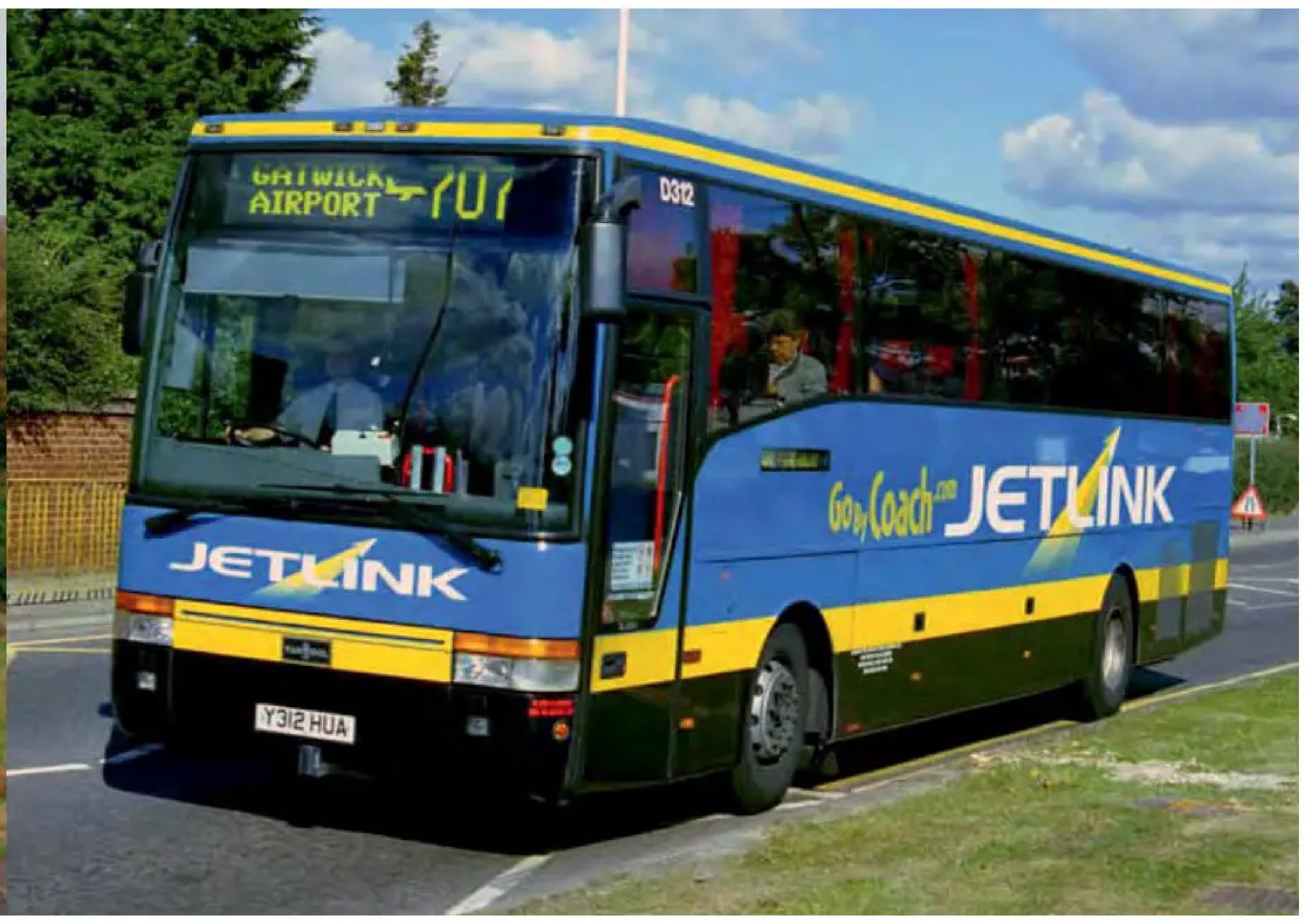
In the recent 'Return Journey: Newport's Scanias' *B&CP*, December 2024, mention was not made of either Marshall-bodied Ailsas or Volvo Citybuses, of which combination Derby had both. Along with Derby, Strathclyde had a pair of Marshall-bodied stock Ailsas, and the prototype Volvo Citybus.

Here, courtesy of ROGER HALL, are some views…









Report and pictures: **KENNY BARCLAY**

Alizee preserved

Newly preserved is Y312 HUA, a Van Hool T9 Alizee-bodied DAF SB3000 new to Cambridge Coach Services in June 2001. Fully automatic with a ZF gearbox, it was allocated fleetnumber D312 and carried the attractive Jetlink Livery from new, and by May 2003, had received National Express Airport Livery.

In 2009, the coach was sold to Bob Vale coach sales which then painted it in all-over white. In September 2009, the DAF was purchased by Finches Coaches, Wigan which initially kept it in all-over white livery, but with the onboard toilet removed. It was then re-trimmed in an attractive blue moquette and painted in Finches striking orange livery.

In July 2023 with the closure of Finches Coaches, the coach was purchased by Lethers Travel, Leeds and, operating in Finches livery worked school services, private hires, and rail-replacement services.

On 4 August 2024, Y312 HUA was purchased for preservation by Kenny Barclay, and following recovery to GVVT in Glasgow, work commenced servicing and preparation for MoT.

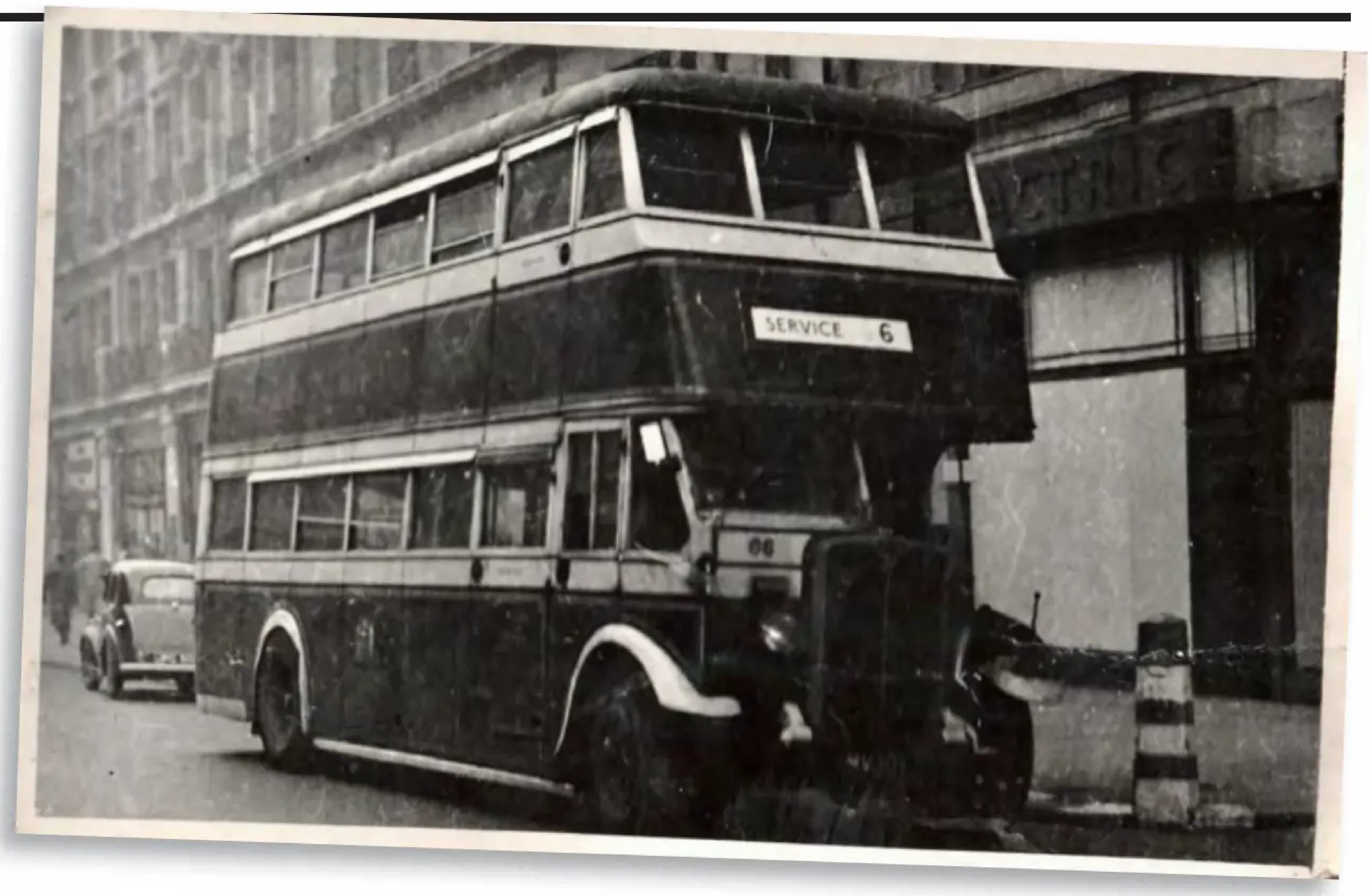
As part of this work, Finches Coaches vinyls were produced from photographic records and applied to the coach. New carpets were also fitted and the vehicle received a comprehensive service.

Finally, on 3 October 2024, Y312 HUA passed its MoT first time with no advisories.

The DAF will initially carry Finches Coaches livery and will attend many events both in Scotland and also around the UK, but over time will be returned to Jetlink Livery. It will be based at SVBM, Lathalmond but will also spend time at GVVT in Glasgow where it recently took part in the GVVT 2024 October open weekend, proving very popular on a run to Cumbernauld and back with other visiting vehicles.

The attached photos were taken on a trip out to Stirling Castle. This is the second coach to join Kenny's collection, who also owns a Plaxton Paramount-bodies Bedford from 1985 based at SVBM Lathalmond.

Regent recognised



1931 Weymann-bodied AEC Regent MV 105 featured in 'Off Route' (*B&CP*, December 2024) has chassis No 6611158 and composite bodywork number C145 of L22/26R layout with two upper-deck side gangways built for AEC as a demonstrator and exhibited at the 1931 Commercial Motor Transport Show and demonstrated to Sheffield Corporation, The body was built by Weymann prior to the formation of the MCW sales organisation so the mention of Metro-Cammell is incorrect. It was fitted with an AEC A161 8.8-litre indirect injection diesel engine in September 1932, purchased by Sheffield in November 1932 and numbered 66. It was loaned to London Transport from 24 to 18December1940, operating out of Willesden (AC) garage. Returned to Sheffield, it was withdrawn in January 1945 and sold for scrap.

The picture is therefore interesting as the bus spent less than two months in the capital, and so was taken between the two above dates.

Thanks to JOHN SEALE and MICHAEL POOLE for the above information.

Decision time for unique Guy

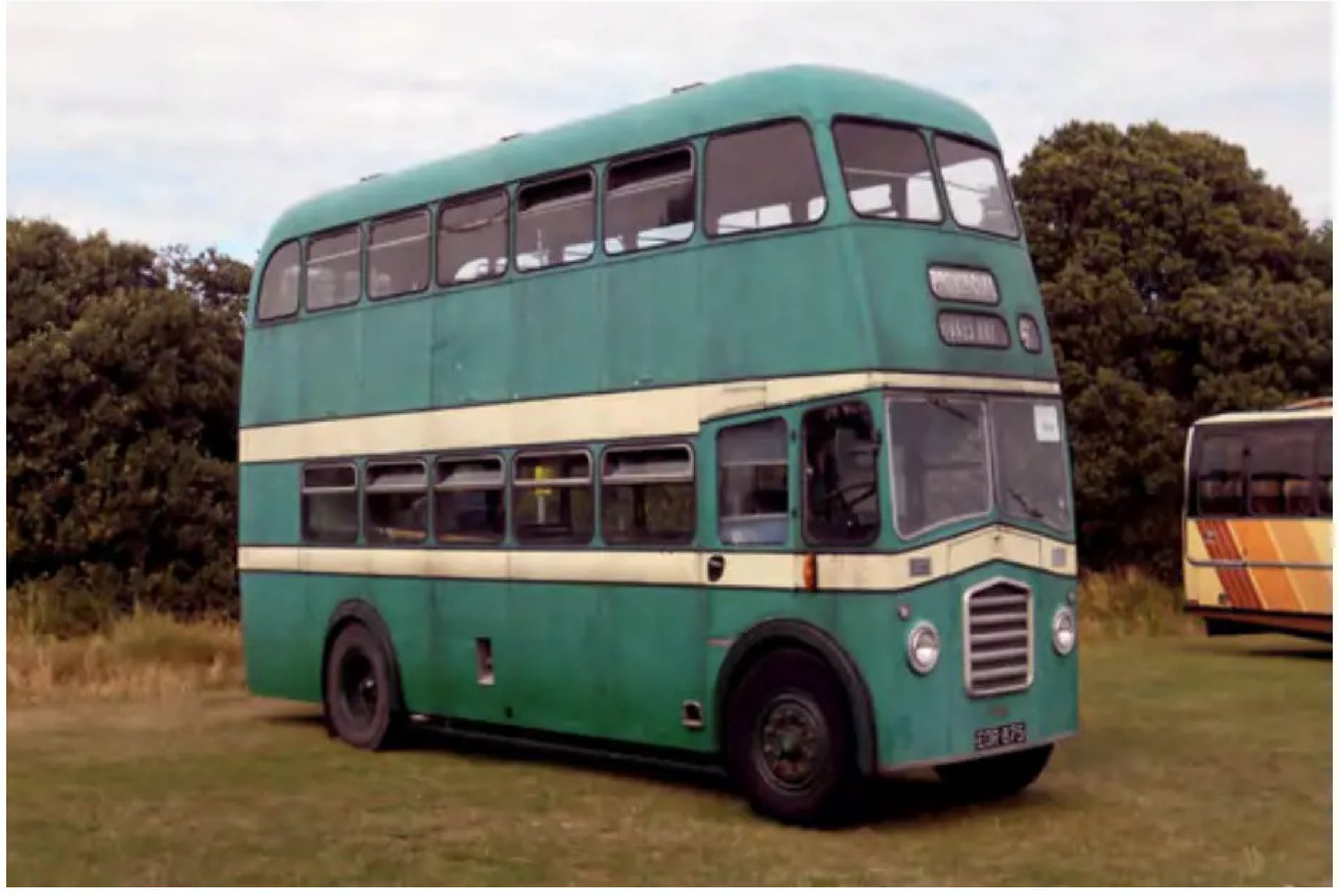
Former Gosport & Fareham 17 (EOR 875), a 1945 Guy Arab II with 1958 Reading bodywork is a unique survivor of the full-front body style built by Reading's for that operator. Despite appearances, the Arab does not have a Deutz air-cooled engine but retains the original Gardner 5LW unit. It also has an Arab radiator hidden behind the front grille.

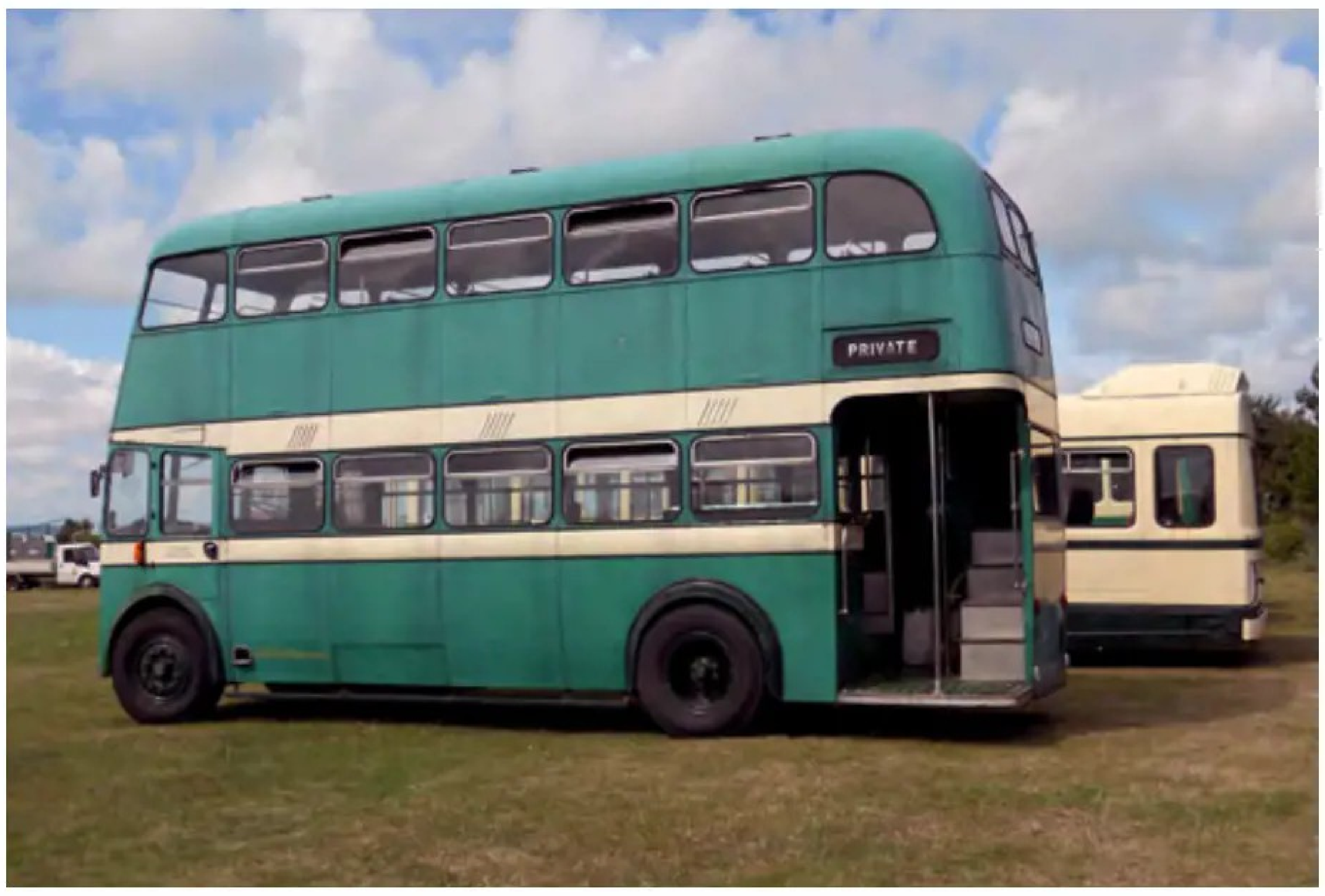
No 17 was acquired by John Sherwin, Patrick Miller and Bob Jackson in August 2009 from Roland Bird of Gillingham, Kent, for continued preservation. Patrick and Bob have supported the Arab's upkeep following John's untimely passing but, following a rent increase and the funding account's exhaustion, not to mention their advancing years, a decision is now needed regarding No 17's future.

The vehicle is complete, although the original green and cream floor tiles are starting to lift and some of the platform timbers have shrunk. The window rubbers require replacement and the rear brake shoes will likely need a reline. The offside rear road spring was refurbished, the front brake linings, piston seals and hoses renewed, and the hydraulic system bled soon after the bus was moved from Kent to Hampshire. The steering mechanism was also repaired.

New batteries were fitted in 2013 and the Arab attended that year's Stokes Bay Rally, as pictured. No 17 has since been kept undercover in West Sussex.

Enquiries are invited from bona-fide preservationists with suggestions on how to save this historic vehicle, whether by forming a group or by outright purchase. Please contact Bob Jackson at: feathersinourcap@hotmail.com.





Report and pictures: **BOB JACKSON**

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HABEL WINCHESTER FURNITURE·CARPETS
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CRAWLEY
UOU 419H
EVENTS

Picture: **DAVID JUKES**

King Alfred New Year Running Day

The Friends of King Alfred Buses (FoKAB) will be holding a mini running day on New Year's Day 2025. The event will be based at Winchester Broadway between 09.00 and 17.00hrs, with at least eight King Alfred vehicles in service.

It is anticipated FoKAB's latest restoration, the all-Leyland Titan PD2 HOR 811, will take an active role as will several other preserved vintage buses. Regular headway free heritage services will be run on city routes; these will be the only bus services in Winchester except BlueStar 1 from Southampton.

Souvenir programmes will be available for £6 on the day or in advance for £7.50 (including post and packaging) from FoKAB, 2 Highcroft Road, Winchester SO22 5GJ. For further details, contact: Info@kingalfredbuses.org.uk or see www/kingalfredbuses.org.

After dark in Barry

The Cardiff Transport Preservation Group held a special 'Twilight Event' on 2 November), to marking 50 years since local government in Wales was completely re-organised. Several councils had previously run their own buses and the day was a chance to run restored examples of these from daylight to dusk

Said CTPG Chairman Mike Taylor: 'The idea is to give a different atmosphere — buses with their lights on in the dark takes you back to the days when buses were still very frequent at night, when there was limited TV and everyone went out especially to the cinema.

'2024 has been busy with events. In Spring the Group celebrated 100 years of Merthyr Tydfil buses, whilst during the Barry Festival of Transport held its Autumn event marking 100 years of Newport motorbuses. This left the Twilight Event to mark 50 years since the end of the Urban District Councils.' Continued Mike: 'We have a unique collection of buses representing the Valleys of South-East Wales. Fifty years ago, the Urban District Councils were very proud of their civic identities. Caerphilly had green buses whist Bedwas & Machen had blue and being just two miles apart they were very different.'

On display inside The Depot was Pontypridd 40 (FNY 933), a Park Royal-bodied Bristol K6A to utility specification, the restoration of which is nearing completion. The bus has been returned to near-original condition complete with wooden slatted seats. We hope to feature the full restoration of tis bus as soon as it is complete.

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PAX 466F

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CAERPHILLY Bus Station
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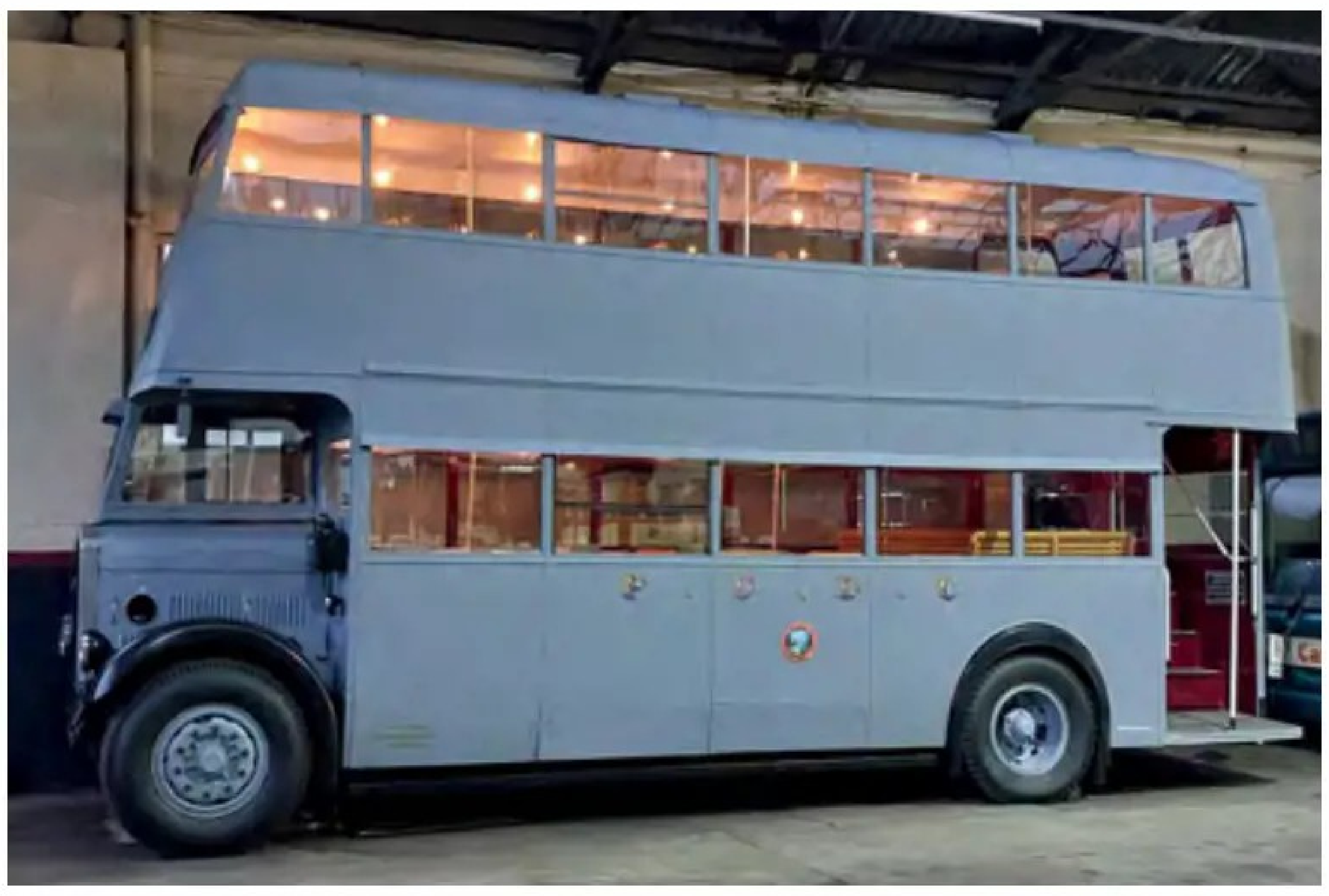
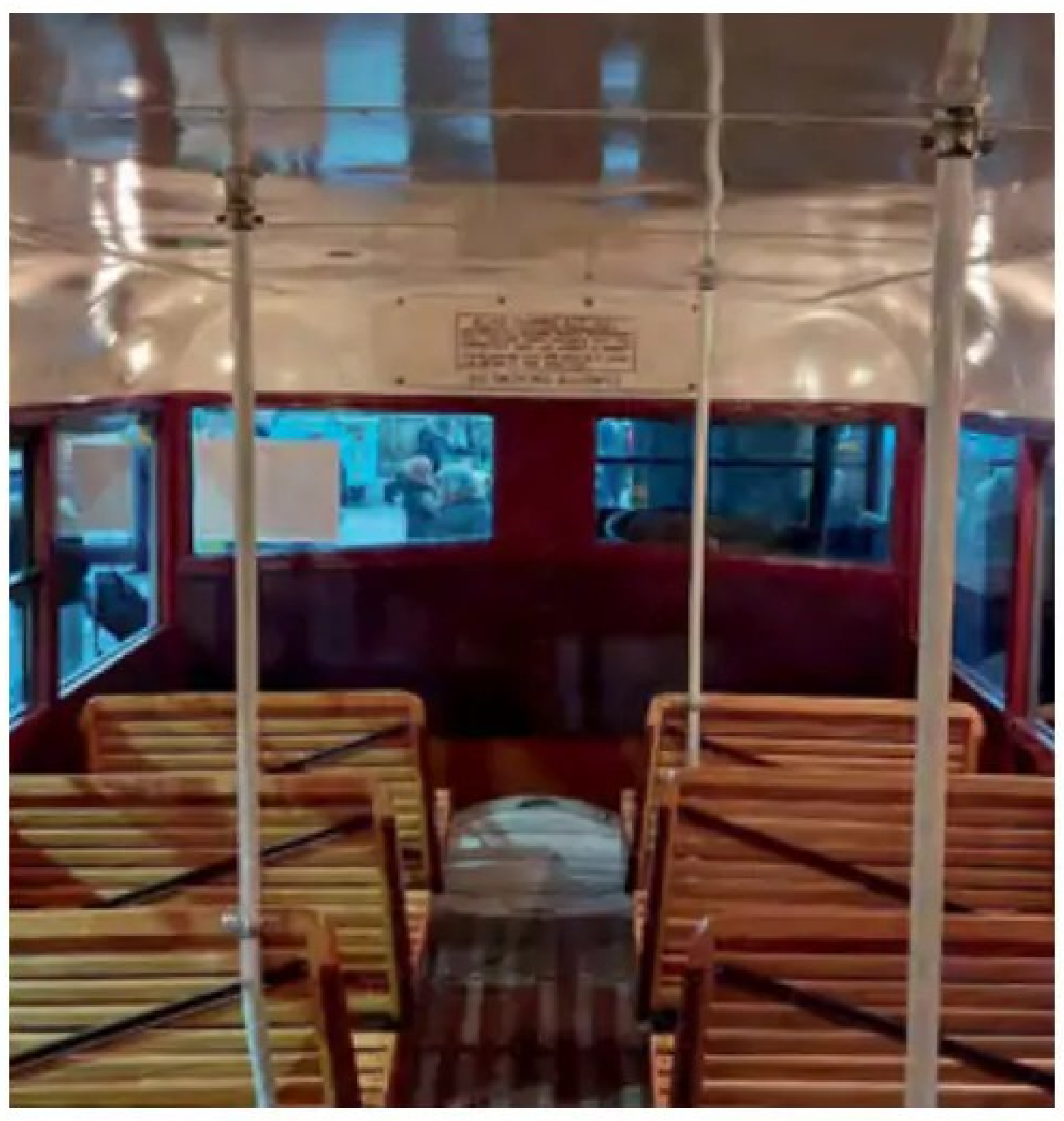
16
LEYLAND
YBO 16T





MANCHETTS
SCANIA
LOV

Love Bus sold

Stockport Leyland PD2 HJA 949E has been sold. It left Ickleton Riverside Barns on Friday 1 November for a new, as yet unknown, owner in Cornwall, who plans to use it as living accommodation, ie a caravan!

Picture: **LEWIS BOWER**

Cardiff Crossley Twice Preserved

On Monday 26 February 2024, Cardiff 46 (EBO 900), an Alexander-bodied Crossley DD42/7, new in June 1949, and thought to be the first Welsh bus to be preserved, took up residence at The Bus Depot, Barry. **GLYN BOWEN** reports.

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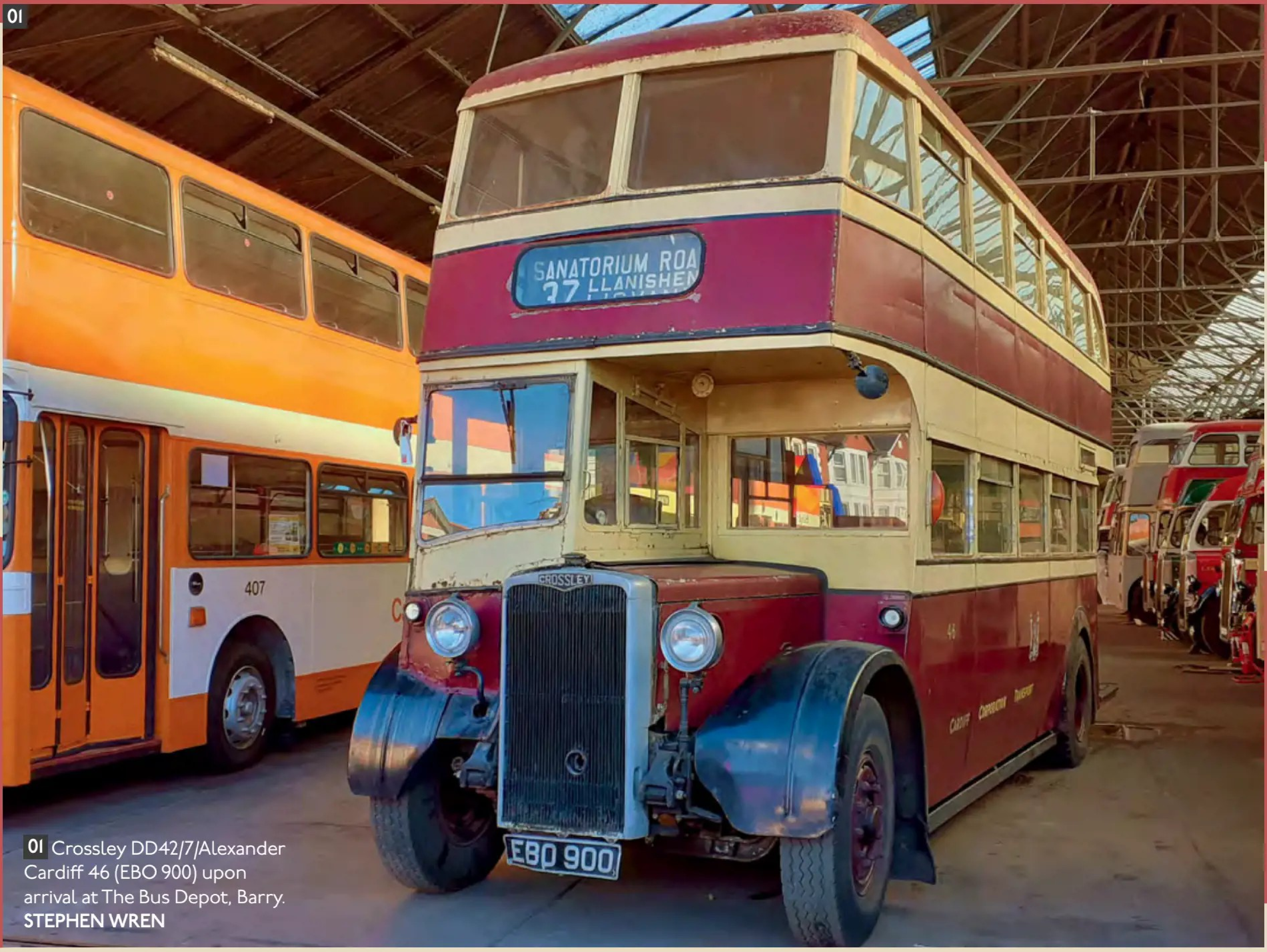


01 Crossley DD42/7/Alexander Cardiff 46 (EBO 900) upon arrival at The Bus Depot, Barry. **STEPHEN WREN**

In 1966, four local bus enthusiasts Robert Milford, Lyndon Rees, the late John Woodward and the writer formed The Cardiff 46 Group with the aim of securing ownership of the last Cardiff Crossley motorbus for preservation, following 17 years with the city operator. In the 1960s the idea of preserving a bus was quite unusual. Cardiff City Council was asked if it would donate the bus, but as agreement could not be reached. It was decided to price the vehicle on the average sale price of the five previously sold similar buses of the batch.

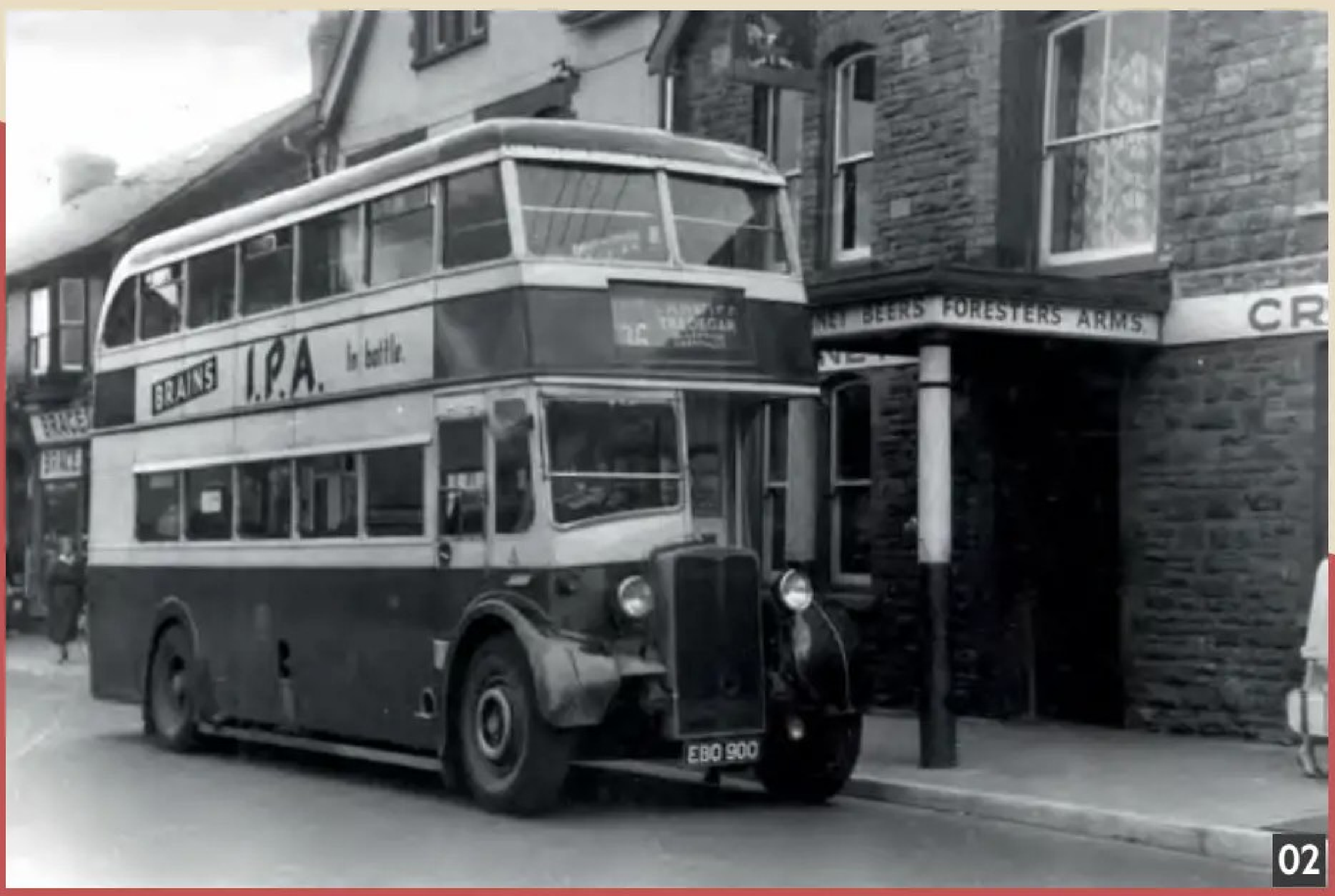
As some of these had been stripped for spares, the average was £60 plus £12 for slave tyres (c£938 at 2024 prices).

I observed at the time that this was 'Not too bad a price, as No 46 had during its last days had operated in full service and somehow had a full tank of fuel!

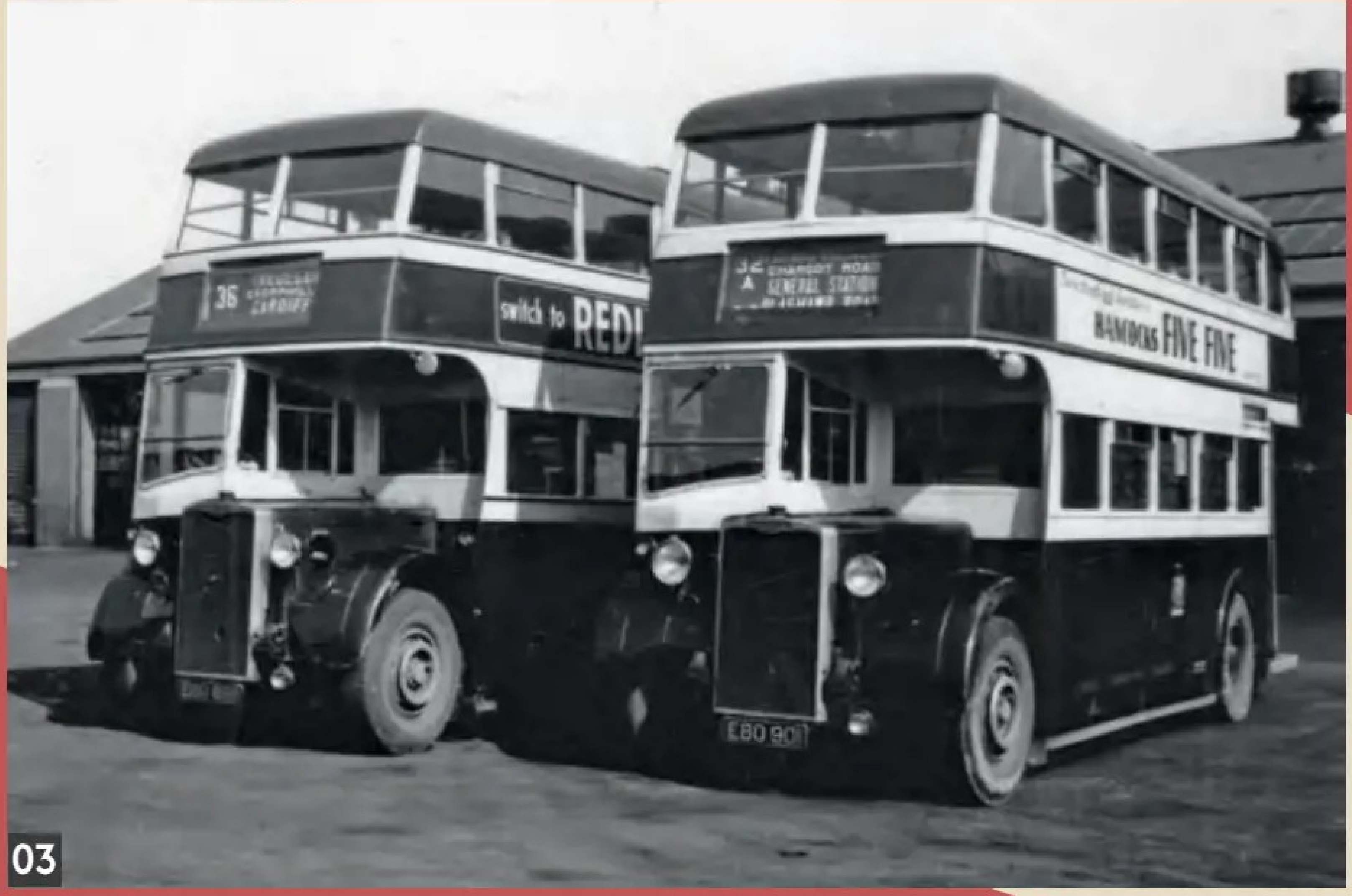
No 46's first home was alongside a barn on a farm near Cowbridge, covered by a tarpaulin. It then spent time in a hangar at RAF St Athan, then Llandow.

I next obtained some new wings from Stockport whilst Robert achieved weekend paint shop time at Roath depot. Looking very smart, No 46 appeared at a number of rallies, Beaulieu, Stratford, Weymouth and Bristol amongst others.

Alas by 1977, housing a preserved bus was becoming a problem so the decision was made to pass ownership to the National Museum of Wales for display at the Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum in Cardiff Bay. When this closed, with 47 years having passed in National Museum of Wales care, No 46 is now at The Bus Depot at Barry, where its condition is being reviewed.



BRAINS I.P.A. In bottle
FORESTERS ARMS
EBO 900



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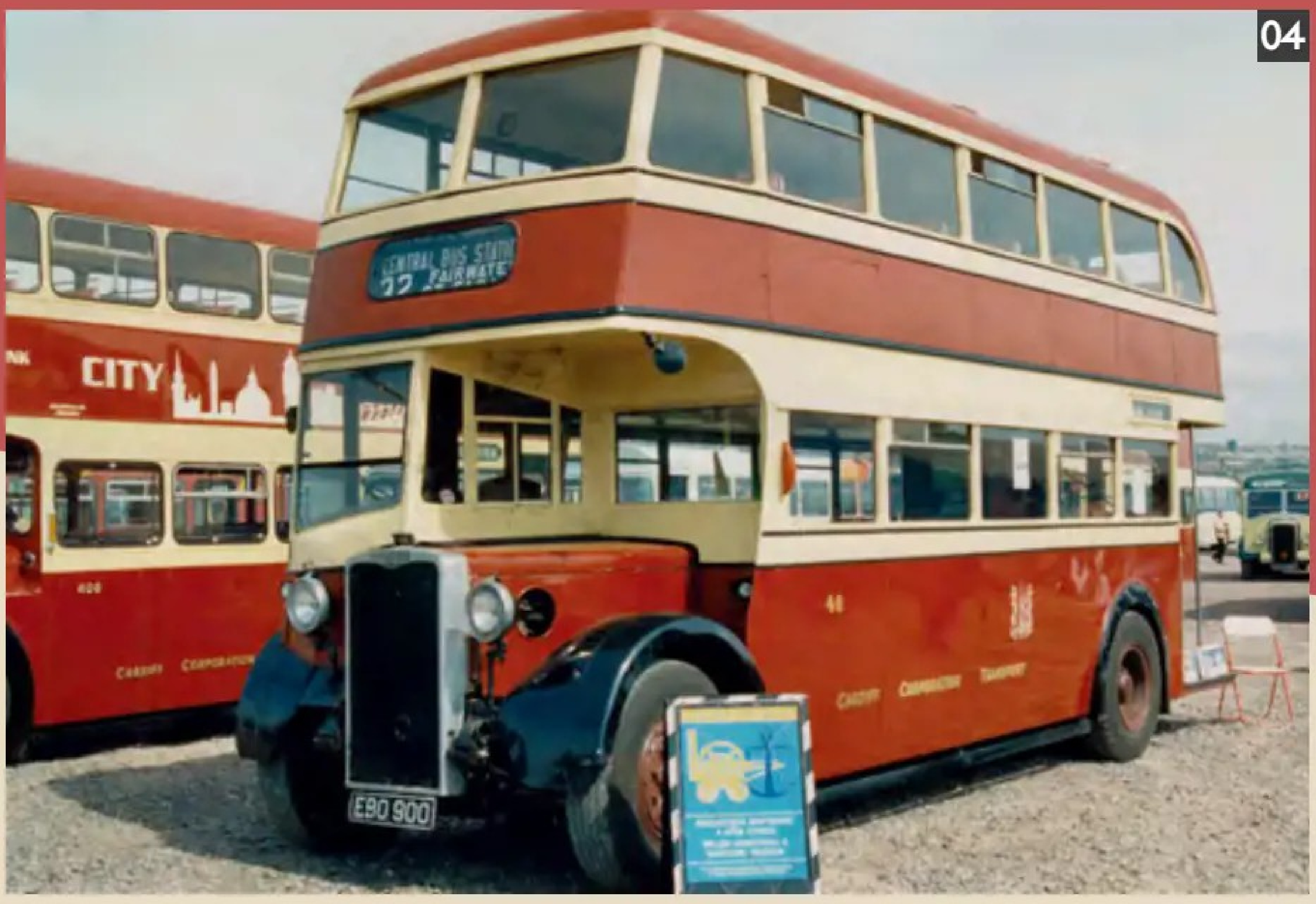
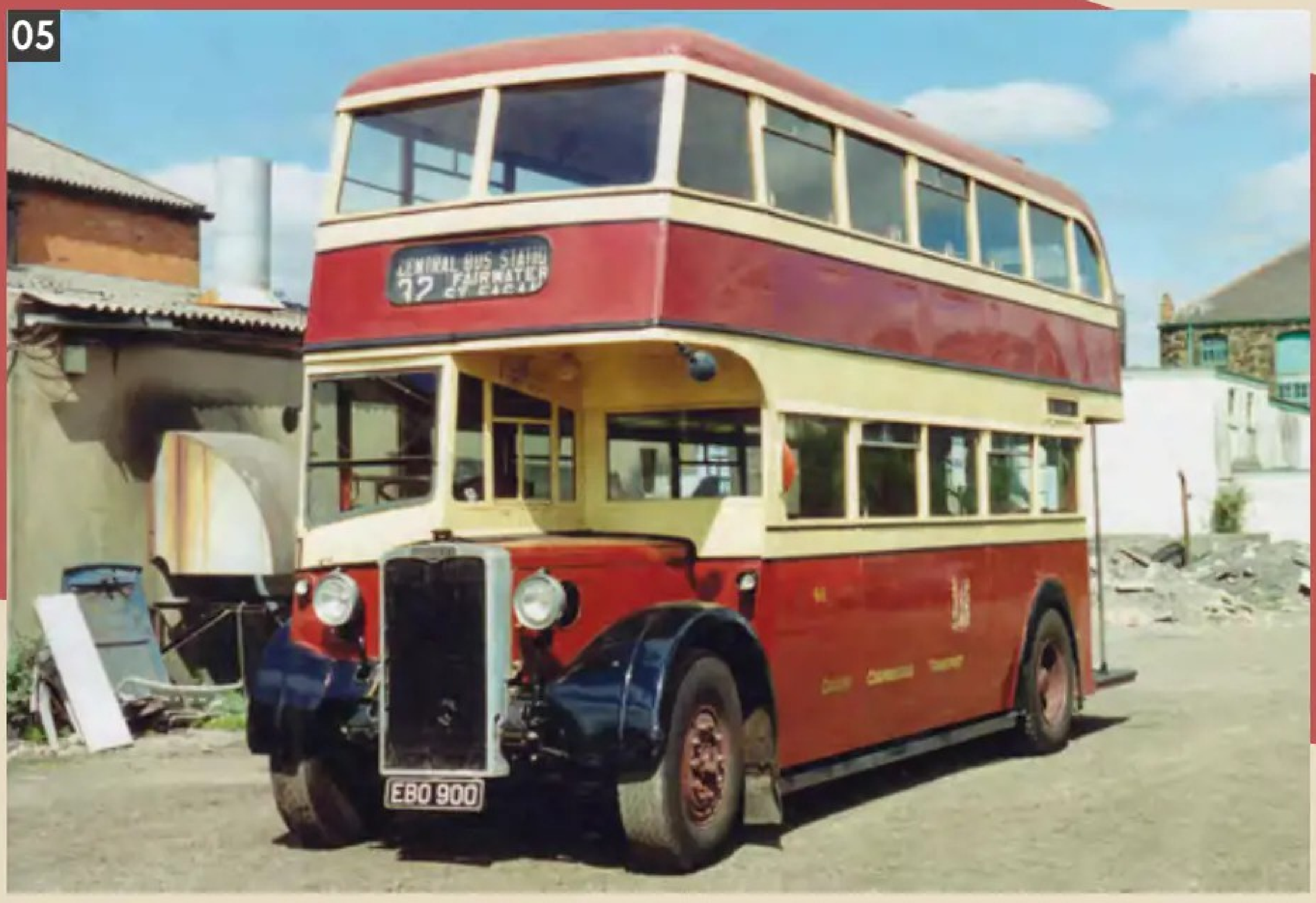
EBO 901



CITY
EBO 900



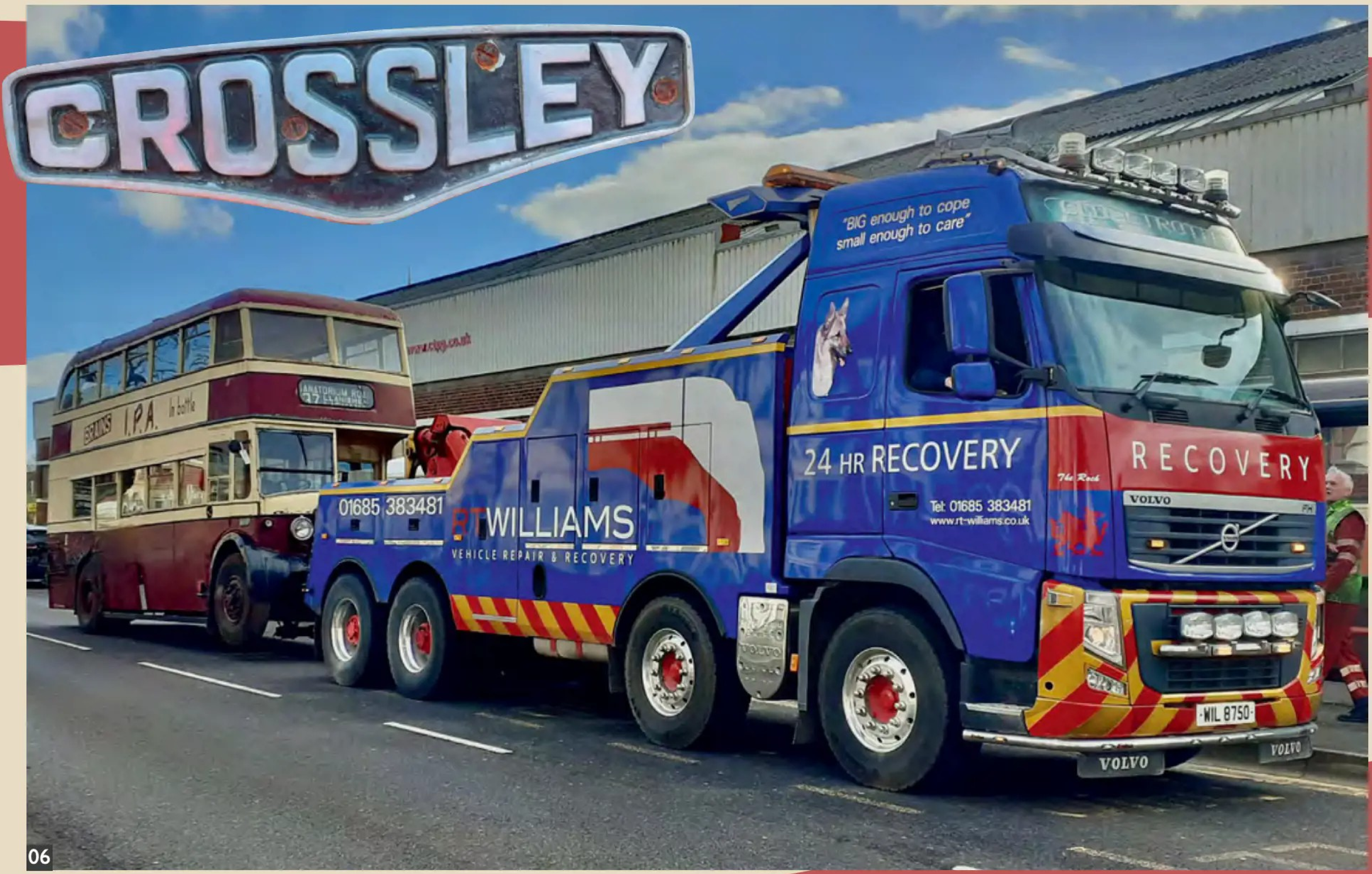
02 No 46 in service on route 36 (Cardiff–Tredegar) in Cowbridge Road East, Cardiff. **CTPG COLLECTION**

03 Cardiff's six Crossley DD42/7s were fitted with Alexander lowbridge bodywork. Here we see No 46 in company with No 44 (EBD 898). **CTPG COLLECTION**

04 No 46 rallying prior to its inclusion in the Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum. **CTPG COLLECTION**

05 Another day, another rally. **STEPHEN WREN**

06 No 46 arrives at The Bus Depot, Barry. **STEPHEN WREN**



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WIL 8750

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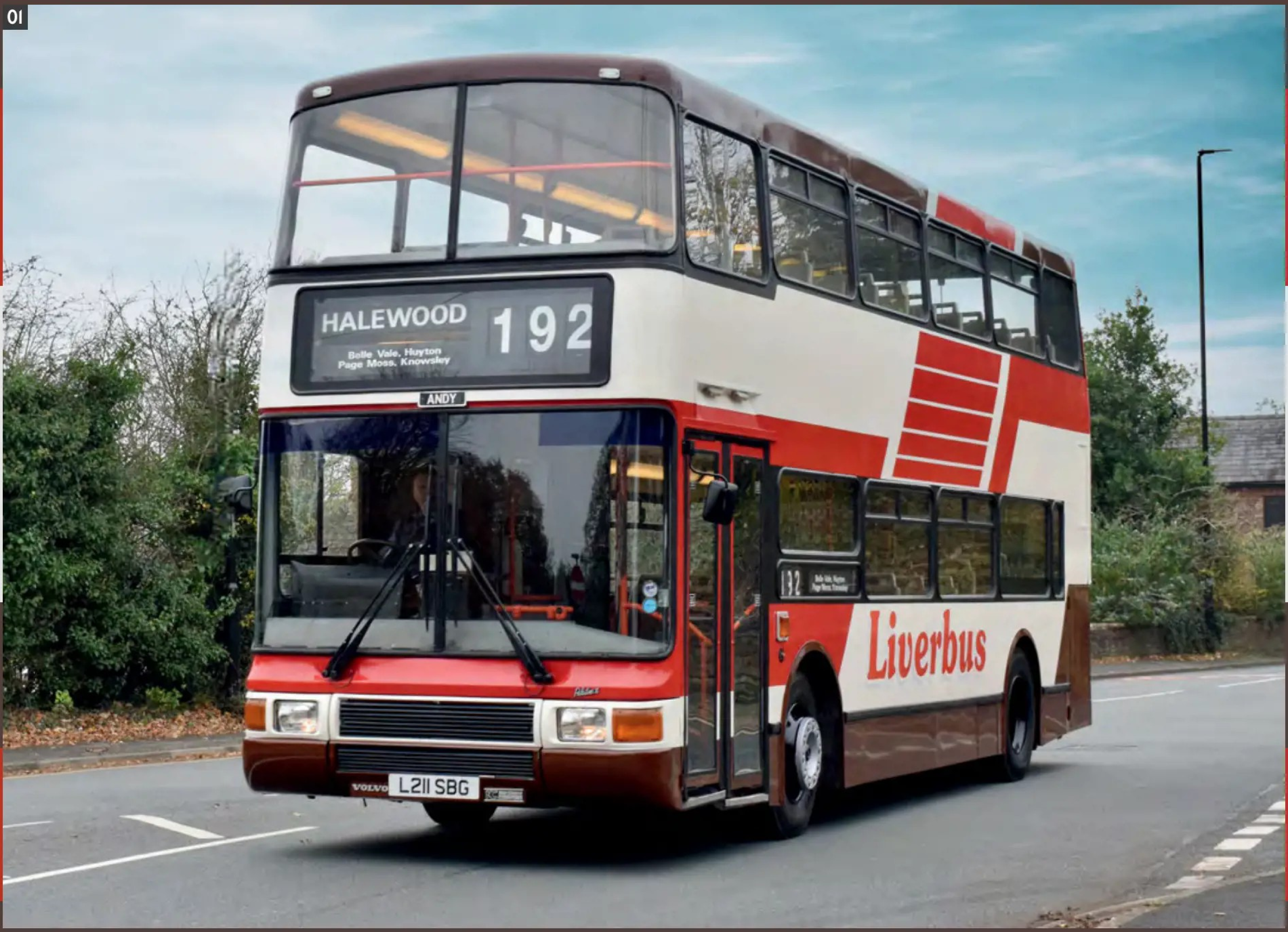


Liverbird!

TERRY MORRIS tells the story of now preserved Liverbus 211 (L211 SBG), a Northern Counties Palatine II-bodied Volvo Olympian.

To meet the requirements of the Transport Act 1985, Merseyside PTE's bus operations were divested to a new independent company, Merseyside Transport Ltd (MTL), trading as Merseybus. Merseyside PTA retained a shareholding, when the company was purchased by its management and staff in a £5.9m Employee Share Ownership Plan in 1993.

LIVERBUS

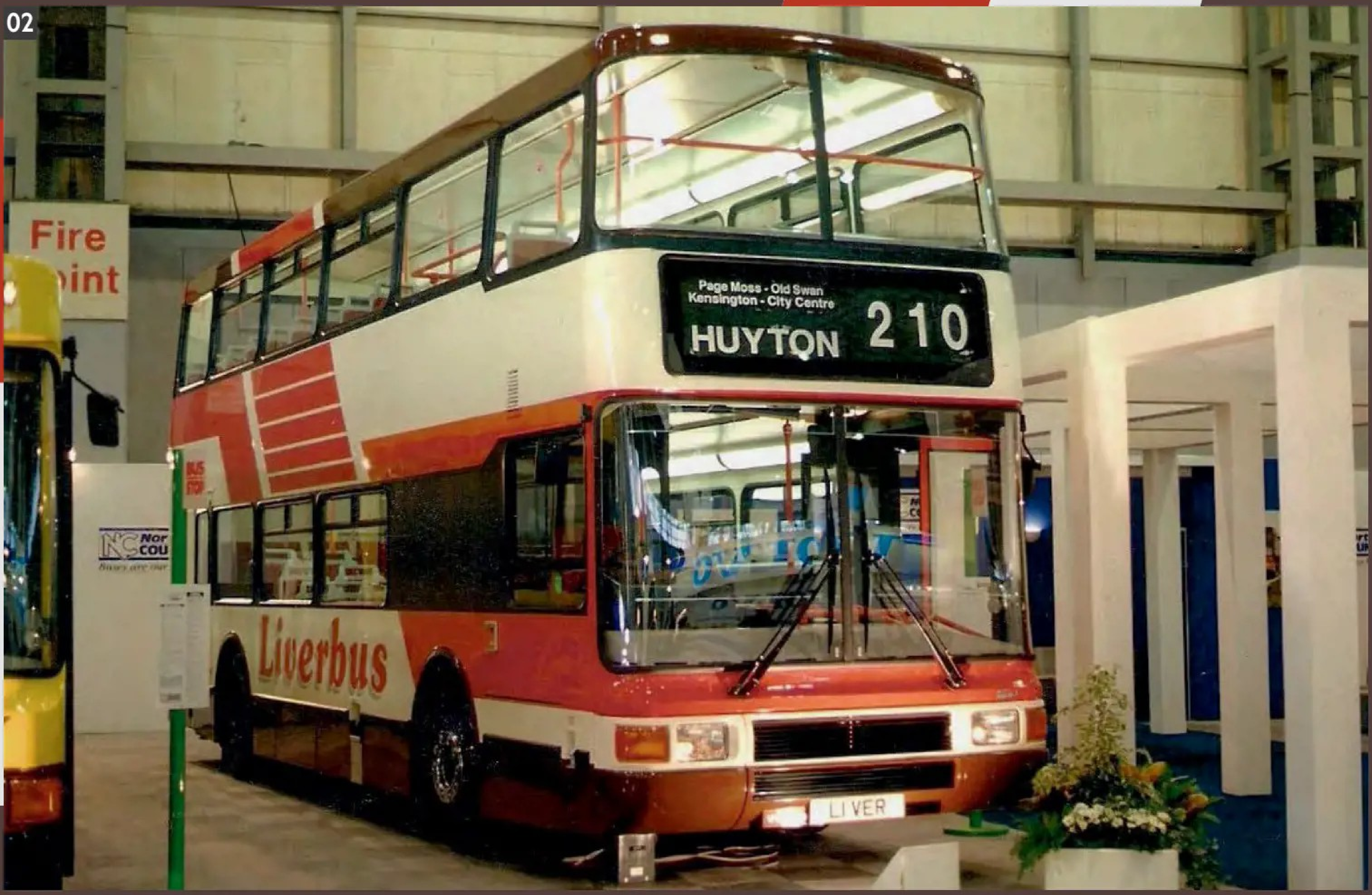
Merseybus expanded quickly both within the Merseyside area and further afield, reaching into Manchester, North London, Lancaster, Warrington and South Lancashire, attracting quality competition, particularly from within Liverpool itself with new independents such as Liverbus hoping for a slice of the action.

Owned by Gemsam Holdings, Liverbus was an independent operator set up by former Merseybus employees in January 1990. Initially founded with a small fleet of former Greater Manchester Leyland Atlanteans, Liverbus built up a network of services between its Huyton base and Liverpool city centre. A private hire/coach excursion operation, Coach 2000, was established in the summer of 1990.

By 1993, Liverbus had become involved in three long-term Merseytravel contracts, had invested in numerous new single- and double-decker vehicles mainly bodied by Northern Counties and had established a London operation, London Suburban Bus. Initially Merseybus did not operate in competition with Liverbus, but in 1995, it was duplicating its entire network, and in April 1995, it was announced that MTL had acquired Gemsam Holdings in a £2m+ deal, to include both Liverbus and Coach 2000.

Initially the Liverbus white, red and brown livery was maintained, but an announced investment in new buses failed to materialise, and by 1996, the MTL fleet livery of red and cream along with a new fleetname, MTL Liverbus, was adopted.

On 17 February 2000, MTL was purchased by the emerging Arriva Group for £85m, MTL's share-holding workers each receiving £13,500 in windfall gains from the sale. The Huyton depot and route network had been maintained, but following a route revision by Arriva in the spring of 2000, many of the former Liverbus routes were withdrawn. Arriva finally closed Huyton depot in June 2006 as it was too small and transferred operations to its Green Lane depot in Old Swan.



01 Newly restored Northern Counties Palatine II-bodied Volvo Olympian is seen in Knowsley Village, the out-of-town terminus of its regular route, the 192. **PHILIP LAMB**

02 Northern Counties Palatine II-bodied Volvo Olympian Liverbus L211 SBG at the 1993 Commercial Motor Show carrying fictitious registration L1 VER. **COURTESY TERRY MORRIS**

03 Bodywork repairs underway at Central Bus Restorations in 2018. **MARK OWENS**

04 The offside following Mark's excellent panel work. **MARK OWENS**

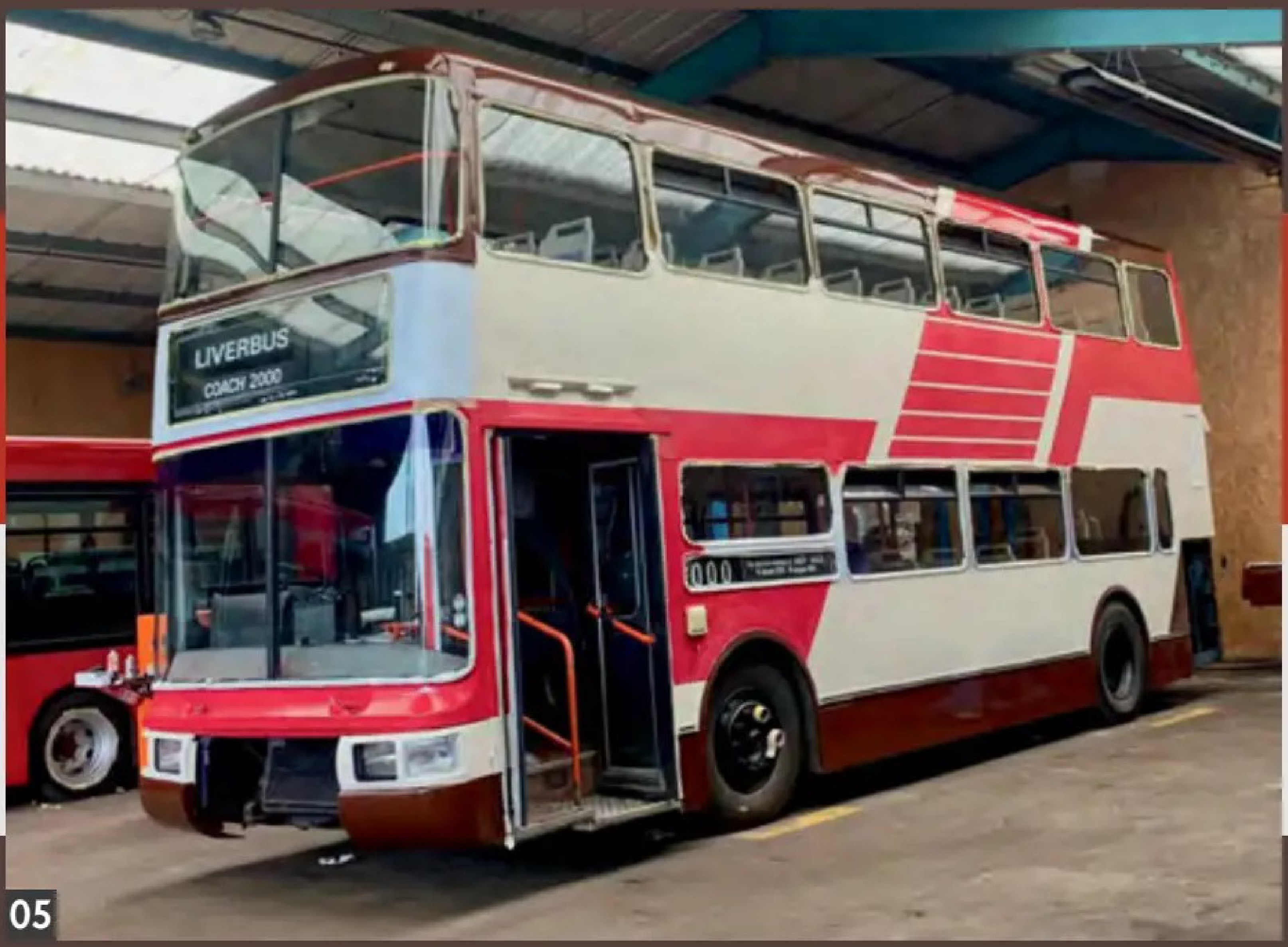
LIVERBUS 211

Liverbus 211 (L211 SBG) was one of 19 Volvo Olympians with Northern Counties Palatine II bodywork ordered by Gemsam Holdings (16 for London Suburban, Edmonton, and three for Liverbus). No 211 was the 65th Volvo Olympian chassis off the production line, and on 1 October 1993, it was displayed at the that year's Commercial Motor Show carrying the fictitious registration L1VER and wearing a 'Venetian Blind'-style livery with large Liverbus fleetnames on the lower-deck panels. No fleetnumber was carried, and the bus entered service not long afterwards. No 211's livery should have been unique but Nos 218/ 9 (M218/9 YKC) also later wore it, having at first been painted in standard Liverbus livery. The seats currently fitted on the lower-deck are to the Fansa Urban 90 design with approx 2mm of padding as they are to dual purpose spec. These were fitted on both decks when new.

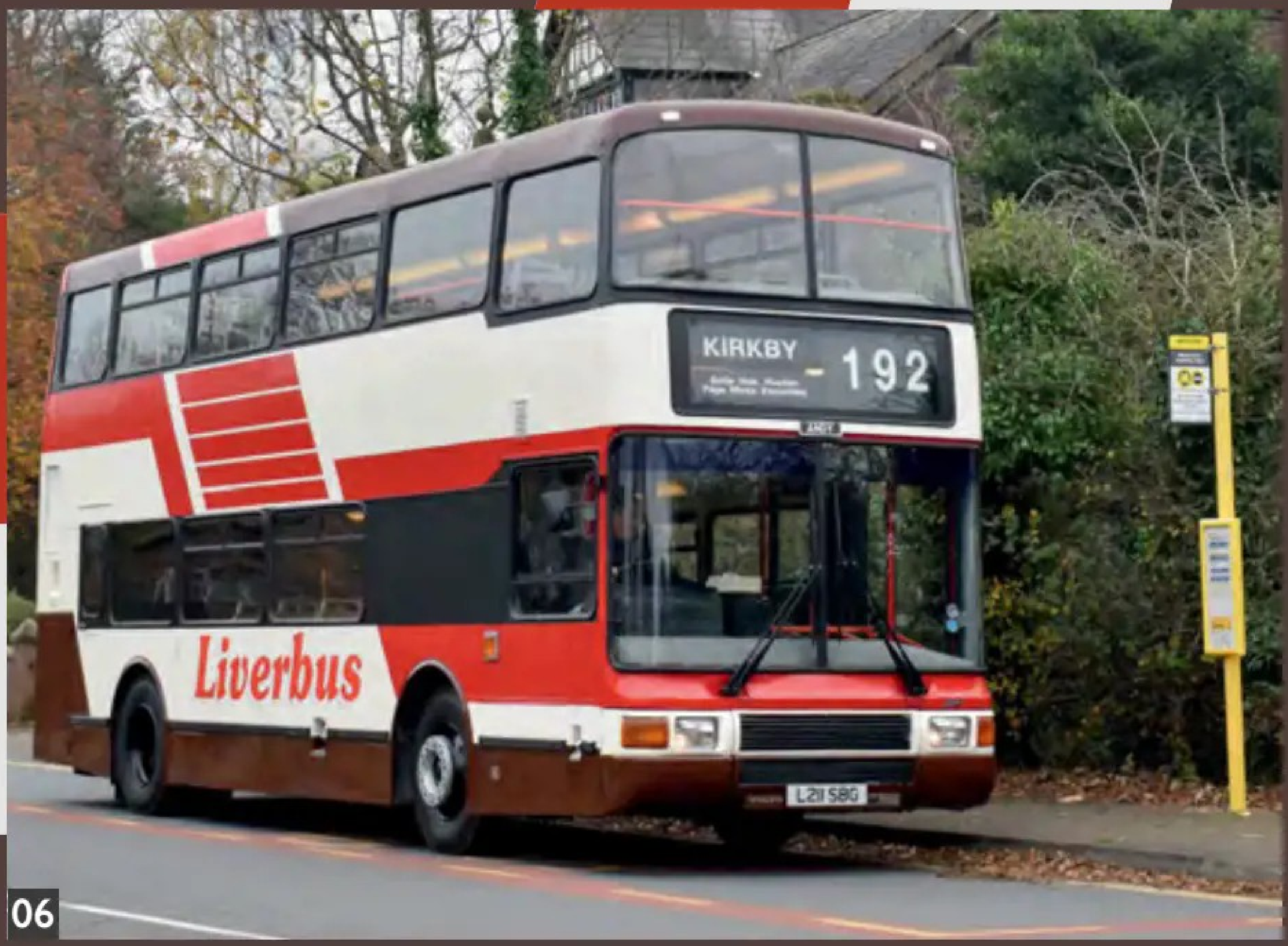
No 211 passed to Merseybus following its takeover of Liverbus in 1995, being renumbered 1211 and in 1998 moved to Gillmoss garage along with sister buses Nos 218/9 (by then 1218/9) to join the Volvo Olympians at that garage that had been allocated for use on routes 4/5/14 (City Centre–Croxteth/Tower Hill). Following the Arriva takeover, the bus became No 3341 and was moved to Speke garage followed by brief spells at Winsford and Laird Street. No 3341 was sold to Geldards of Leeds, remaining there until bought for preservation in 2013.

During its time at Liverbus, L211 SBG acquired the name Andy. Liverbus driver, Andy Wade took a particular liking to No 211 and tried to take it out as often as possible. Sadly, Andy passed away suddenly on 16 August 1994 following a short illness aged just 24. The funeral was well attended with three buses outside Anfield Crematorium that day. They were a former Greater Manchester Leyland Atlantean, a former London Buses Leyland Titan and No 211, all of which had been used to pick up mourners and take them to the crematorium.

A few weeks later, the management at Liverbus fitted Crosville-style name plates to the front and rear of the bus displaying the name Andy. These remained on the bus until it was withdrawn. They were then removed and handed over to the writer.



05 The transformation in full flow under the careful brushwork of Mat Southart in May 2024. **COURTESY TERRY MORRIS**

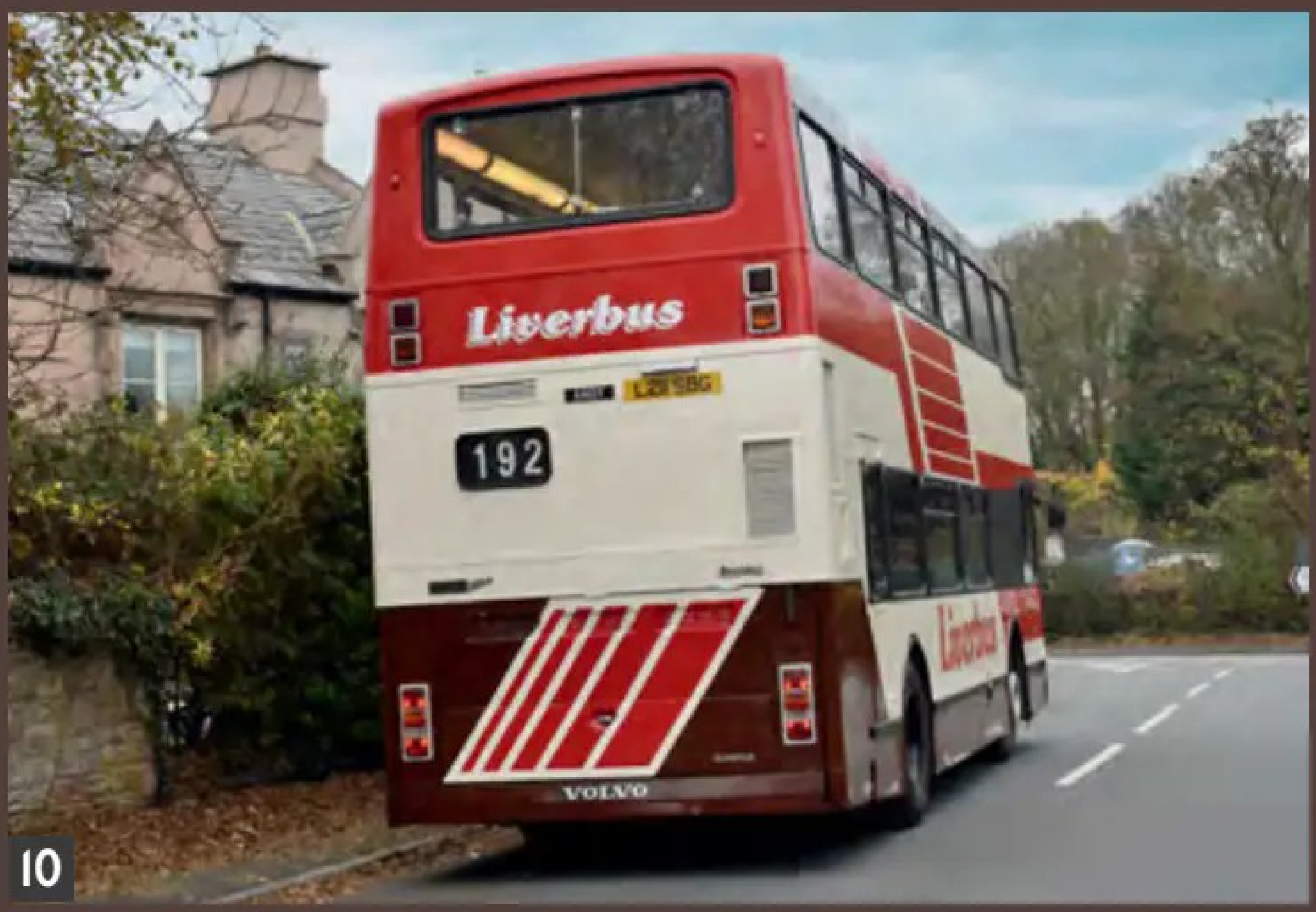


06 No 211 arrives in Knowsley Village. Note that the fleetnumber was never carried. **PHILIP LAMB**

07 Cab detail. **PHILIP LAMB**

08 Original seating remains on lower deck. **PHILIP LAMB**

09 Upper-deck seating approximates the original. **PHILIP LAMB**



10 Original paintwork was uncovered on engine compartment door enabling accurate recreation. **PHILIP LAMB**

A few local enthusiasts went over to Geldards who re-fitted the plates. People who came across the bus in Leeds city centre always told me they had seen it.

PRESERVATION BECKONS

A number of local enthusiasts, including the writer, decided that when the bus was finally withdrawn they would buy it and eventually, in 2012, when Geldards had finished with the bus, we did! Sadly, the engine and other mechanical units had been removed, so it was towed, via Hardwicks, Barnsley, (dealer) to the North West Vehicle Restoration Trust's premises in Kirkby, Liverpool. It looked much worse upon arrival, than it had a few months earlier, but people on Merseyside are made of strong stuff and the task of getting Andy back on the road began.

Geldards had changed the upper-deck seats for examples from a Travel West Midlands bus so those currently fitted in Andy are from No 208 which was languishing in a Barnsley scrapyard. A destination box had to be sourced as the bus had been fitted with electronic blinds, then new blinds made by McKenna's, Middleton, Manchester were installed and the correct paint shades selected to go with the fleetnames made by Greg Taylor It just seemed a never ending list.

Mechanical parts were found, the cracked chassis dealt with and the years of neglect tackled. It seemed that we were facing setback after setback involving, as you can imagine, plenty of foul language, long days and cash spent! Major bodywork repairs were completed by Mark Owen of Central Bus Restorations, before the bus was handed over to Mat Southart for painting. In 2024 the bus was to be revealed at the NWVRT's 2 June Open Day but it decided it would not co-operate, developing serious engine problems instead! Although prevented from running, it was on display attracting plenty of interest.

Then, on Saturday 9 November on the occasion of the Trust's Nocturnal Running Day, Andy was in service, carrying passengers to Prescot railway station and back. Eleven years after buying the bus it was finally finished.

There are far too many people to thank to list them all individually here , but they all played their part in getting Andy back from Geldards to carrying people and keeping Andy Wade's memory alive 30 years after his passing.

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Mystery Tour

We have to own up to not knowing very much about this selection, but we hope that you do! So please fill free to fill in the gaps...

01

01 Burlingham's last heavyweight coach body to proudly bear the name Seagull, was the Seagull 70, which failed to attract much interest. Available on both AEC and Leyland chassis, this forgotten soul is an AEC Reliance new to, well you tell us!

02 Almost no clues at all! This is clearly the product of a minor postwar coachbuilder, the only distinguishing feature being the two-aperture nearside destination display. Someone's even had it away with the radiator!

03 We believe this to be the premises of Reliance of Kelsall, but are a little confused by the Wests fleetname. On the left is Duple Vega-bodied Bedford.SB OMB 217, new to Reliance, but many years prior to this view. It is in the company of new-to Calver of Great Yarmouth 1952 Duple-bodied Bedford OYD EX 6666, which had previously been a lorry.

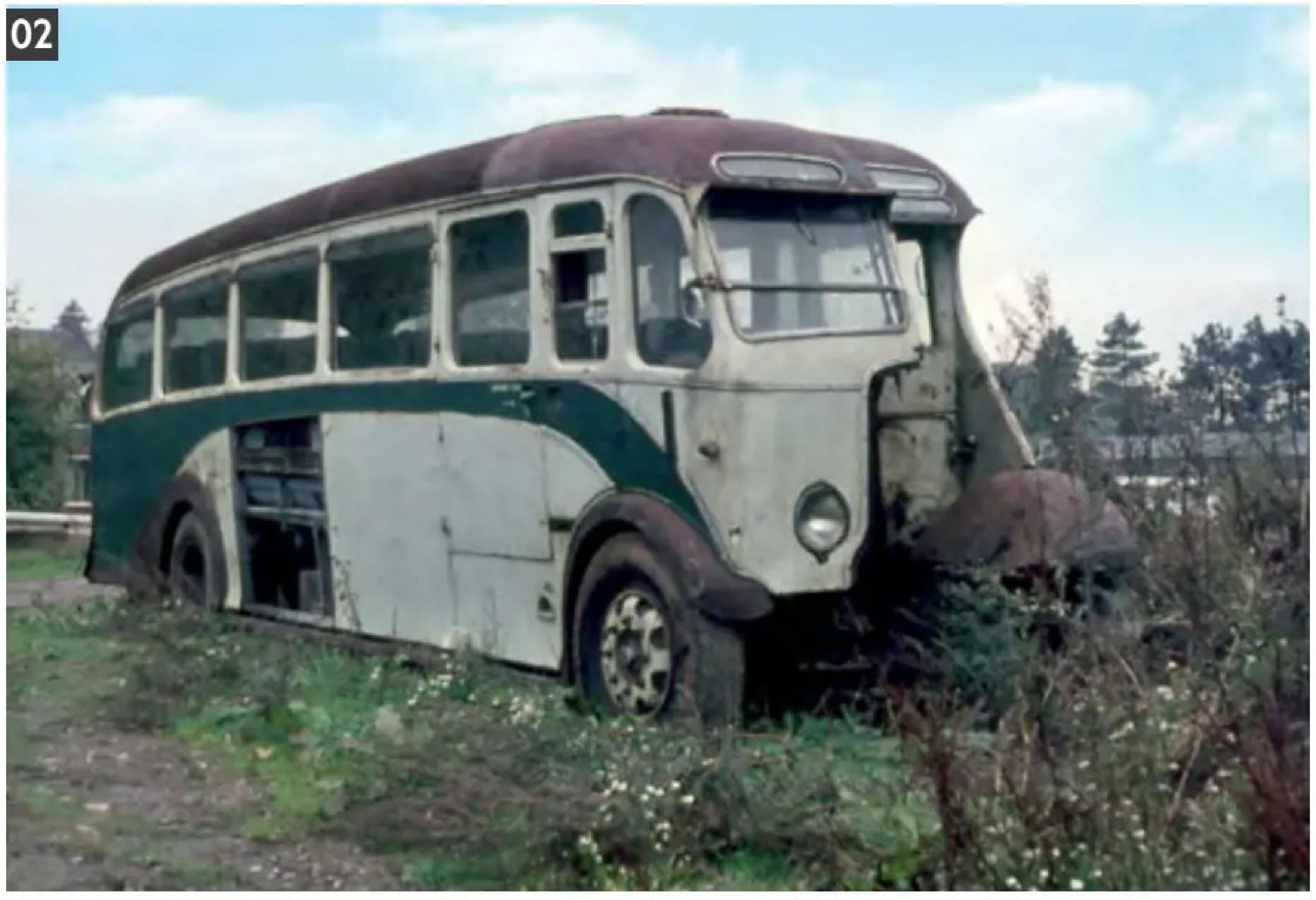
04 Informed guesswork leads us to believe this to be Salford 101 (TRJ 101), a Weymann Fanfare-bodied AEC Reliance purchased by Salford to drive the Transport Committee around in style. These days they might consider a helicopter or maybe a private jet.

05 This is another rare beast. New in 1952 to Ross, Cardiff, trading as Chivers Tours, GKG 1 was a Davies-bodied Dennis Falcon here well past its sell-by date.

06 We think this a Bedford SB, but the bodywork is not Duple, although it shows signs of Duple influence. Once again we are hoping someone out there knows more!

Pictures: **PRESBUS ARCHIVE**

02



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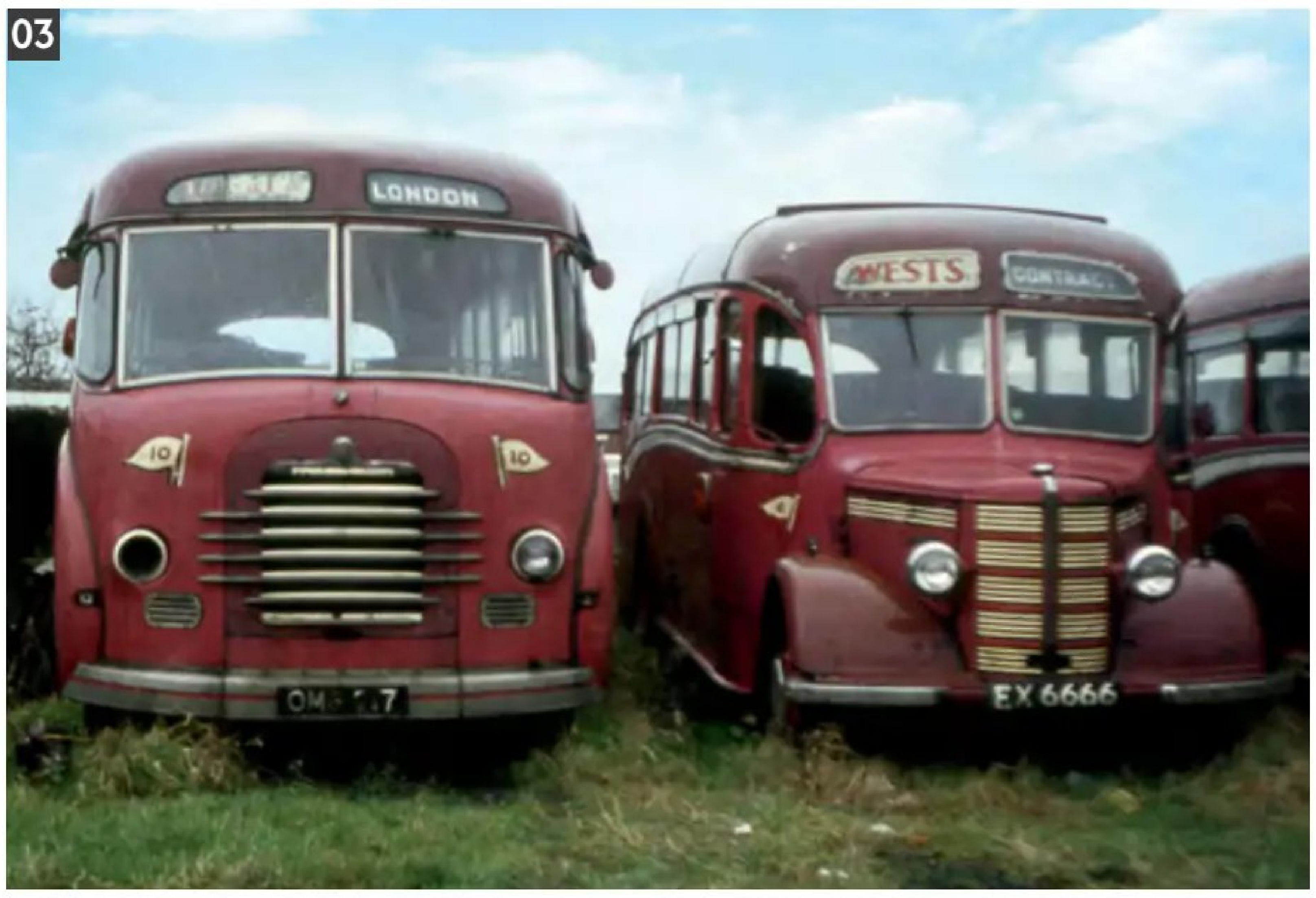
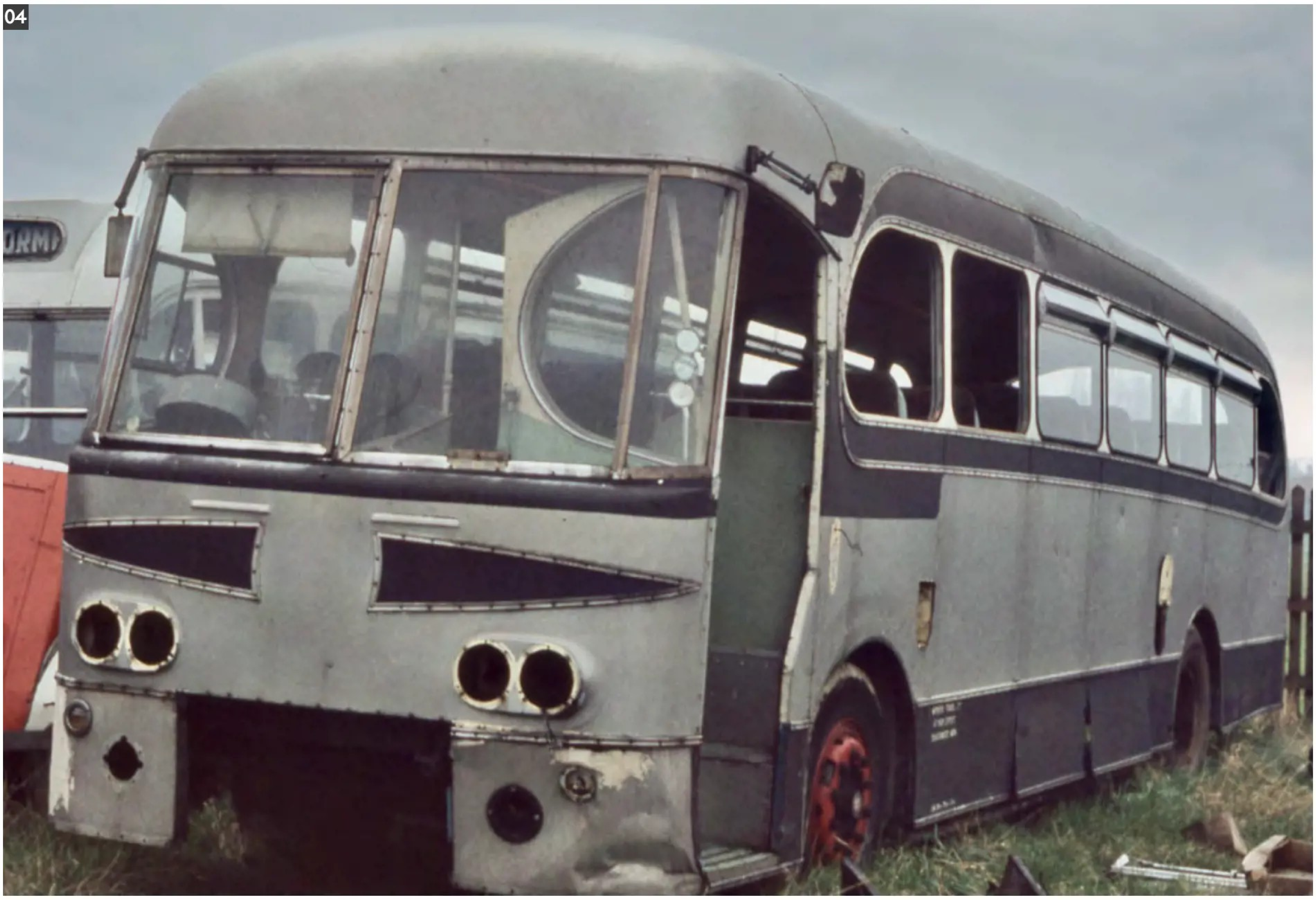

LONDON
WESTS
CONTRACT
EX 6666

04



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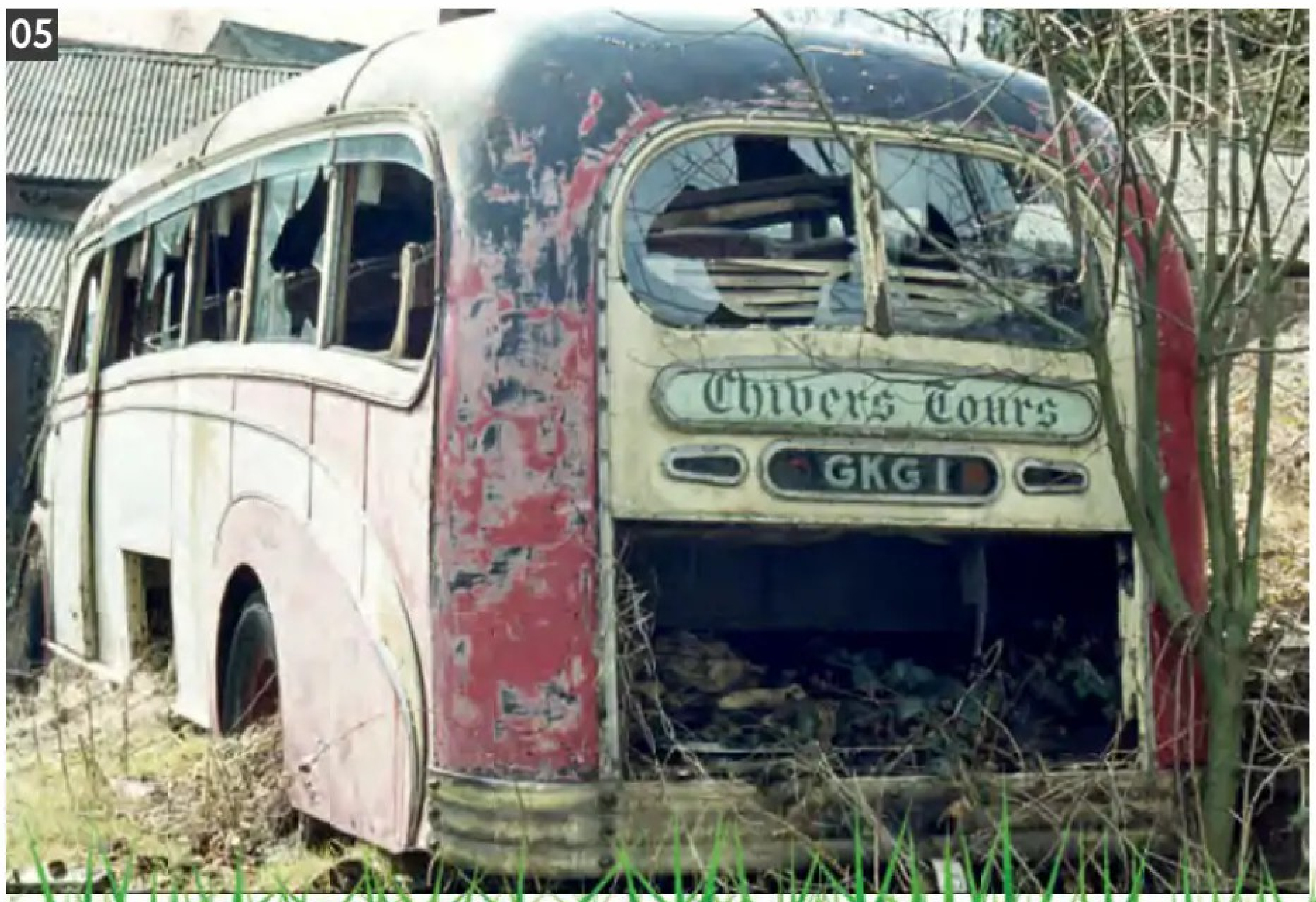
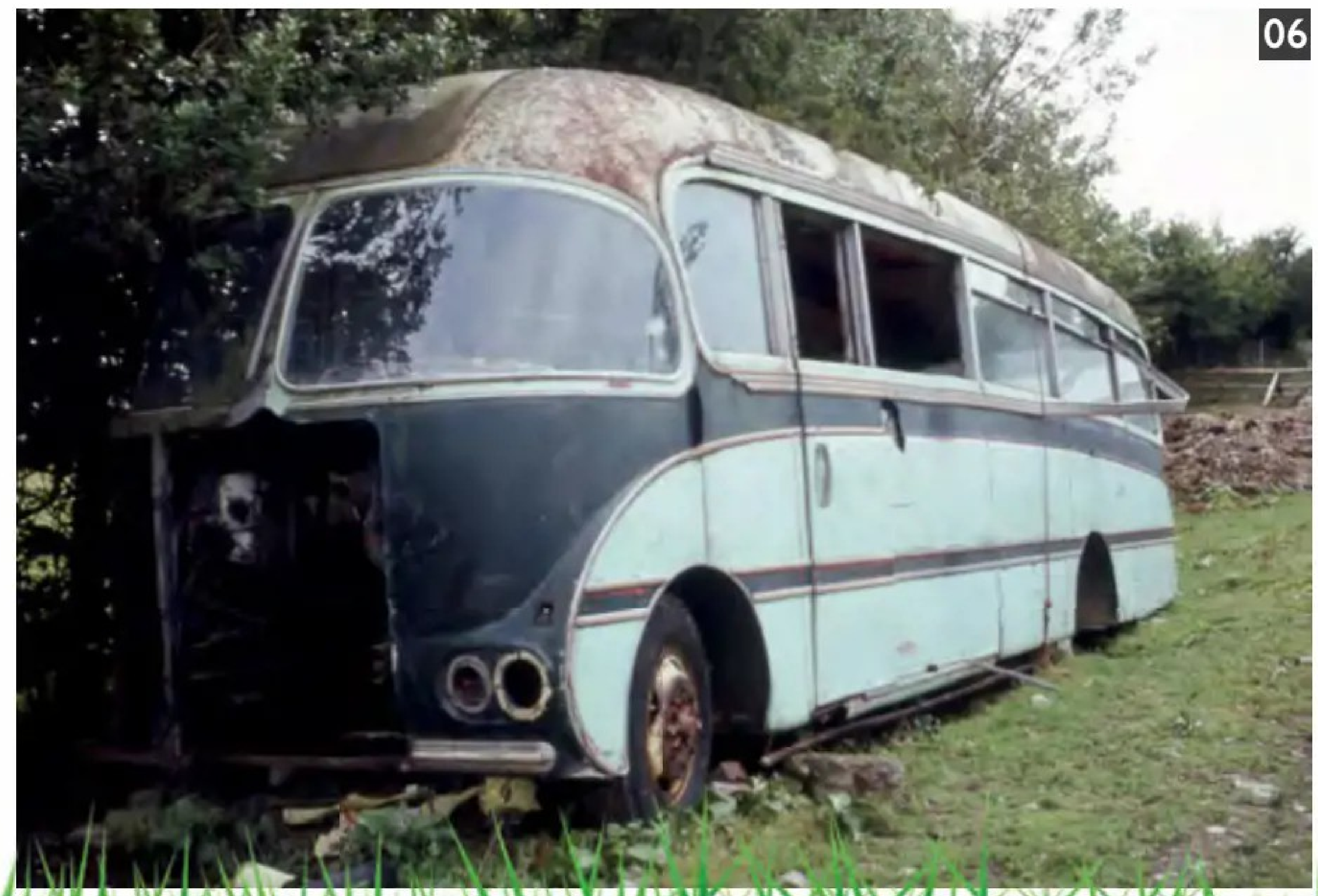
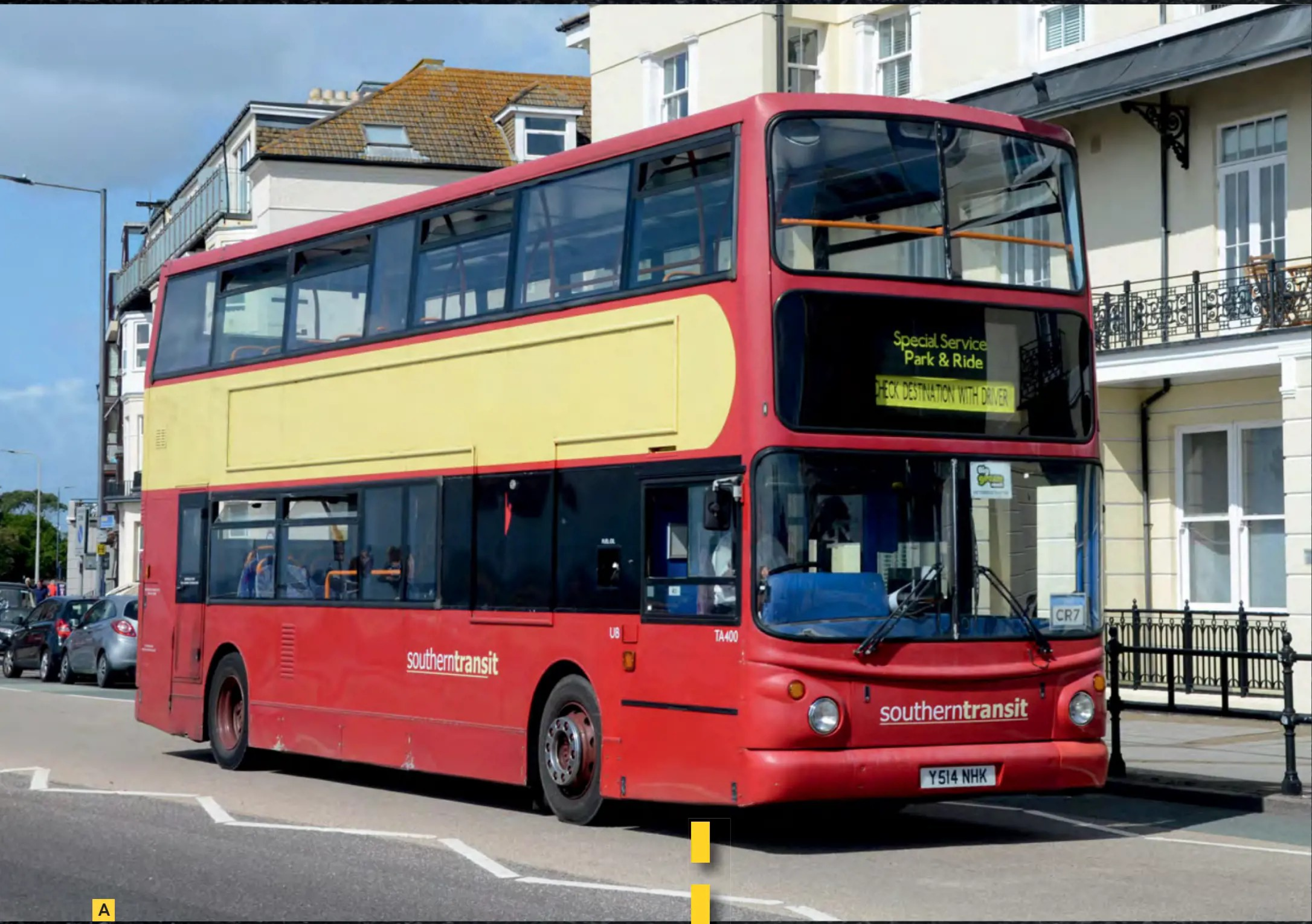

Chivers Tours
GKG 1

06





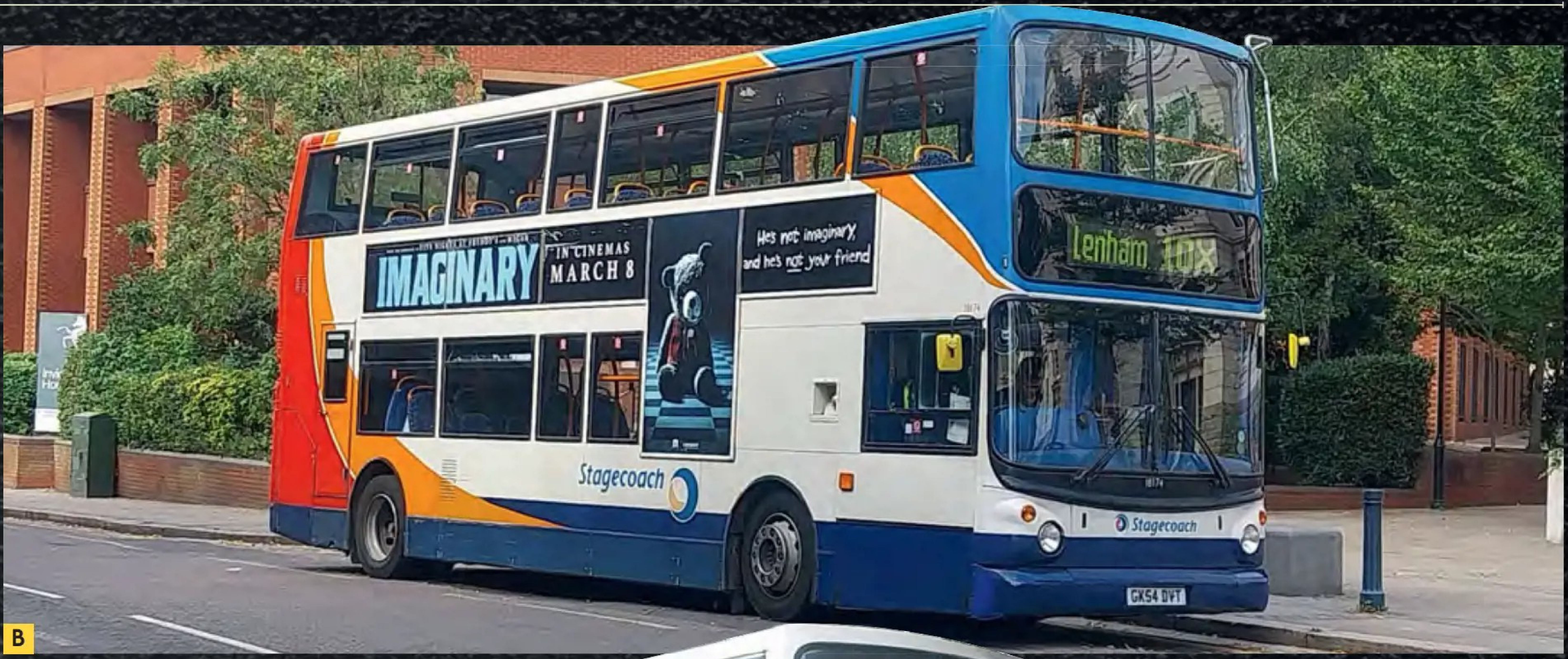
A

On The Road

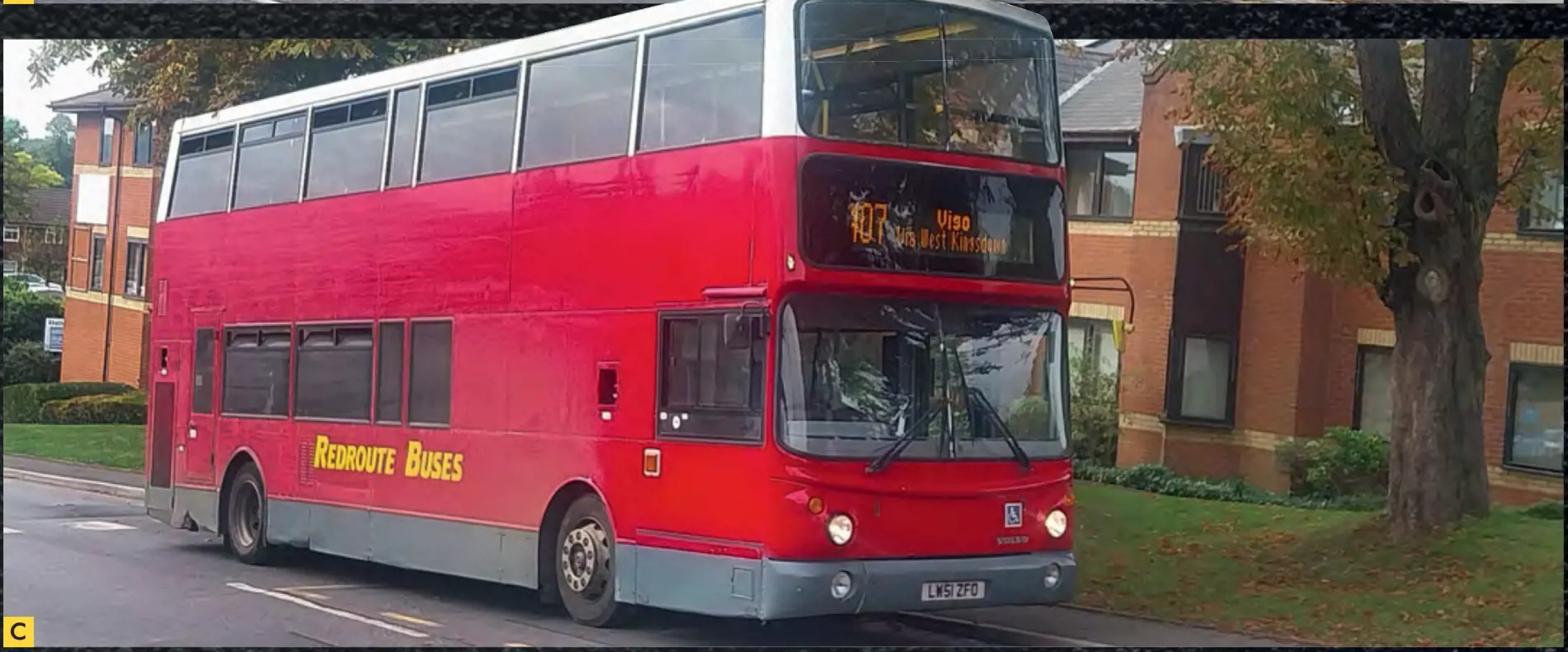
DAVID JUKES presents this month's selection of active older service and preserved buses:

ALX400 ALLSORTS

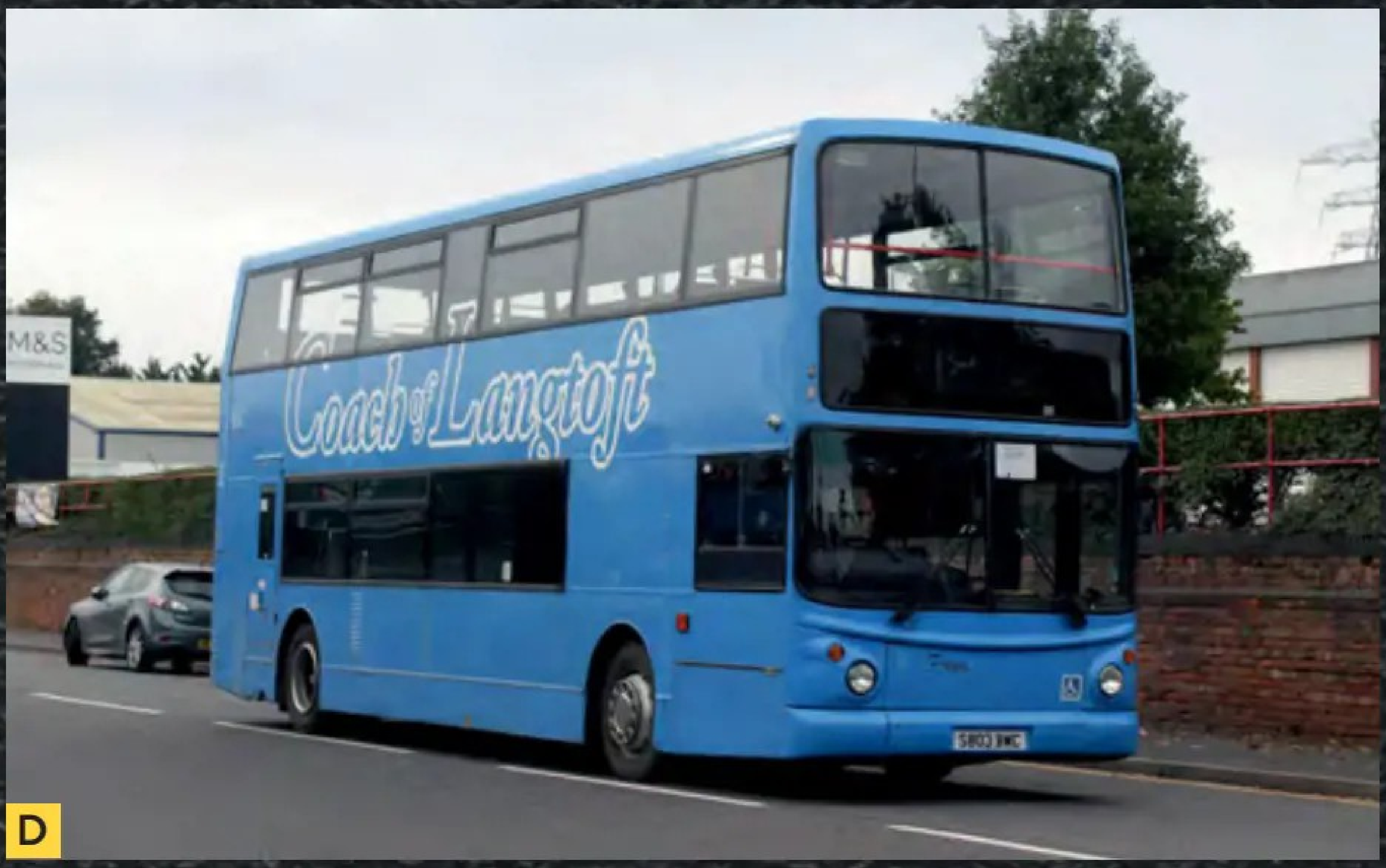
The low-floor double-deck ALX400 body was produced by Alexander, Transbus and Alexander Dennis between 1997 and 2006, with several examples still in passenger service. (A) Operating a shuttle service for Portsmouth's Victorious music festival on 25 August is Southern Transit TA400 (Y514 NHK), a 2001 Dennis Trident new to East London carrying the same fleetnumber. (B) Laying over at Maidstone East railway station on 2 September is Stagecoach South East 18174 (GX54 DVT), a 2004 Dennis Trident new to the operator. (C) The lower-height ALX400 variant (note the stepped lower-deck window line) is fitted to Arriva Southern Counties 6402 (GN04 UDP), a 2004 Volvo B7TL new to Arriva Medway Towns, pictured on 21 September passing the 'Five Bells' public house in Hoo village. (D) Redroute Buses of Gravesend LW51 ZFO, seen at Borough Green three days later, is a 10.7m-length 2001 Volvo B7TL new to Dublin Bus as its AV194 (01-D-10194) – note the Dublin-specified double-curvature windscreen. (E) Curley, trading as Coach of Langtoft, S803 BWC, a 1999 Dennis Trident new to East London as its TA3, is heading for Grantham railway station on 13 October to take up a rail replacement service to Sleaford. Pictured in West Street, Chichester, on 7 November bound for Bognor Regis are Stagecoach South (F) 18188 (MX54 LPP), a 2004 Dennis Trident new to Greater Manchester South, and (G) 18310 (KX05 TWG), a 2005 Dennis Trident also new to Greater Manchester South; both resplendent in current corporate colours.


IMAGINARY
IN CINEMAS MARCH 8
He's not imaginary, and he's not your friend
Lenham 10X
Stagecoach
GK54 DYT

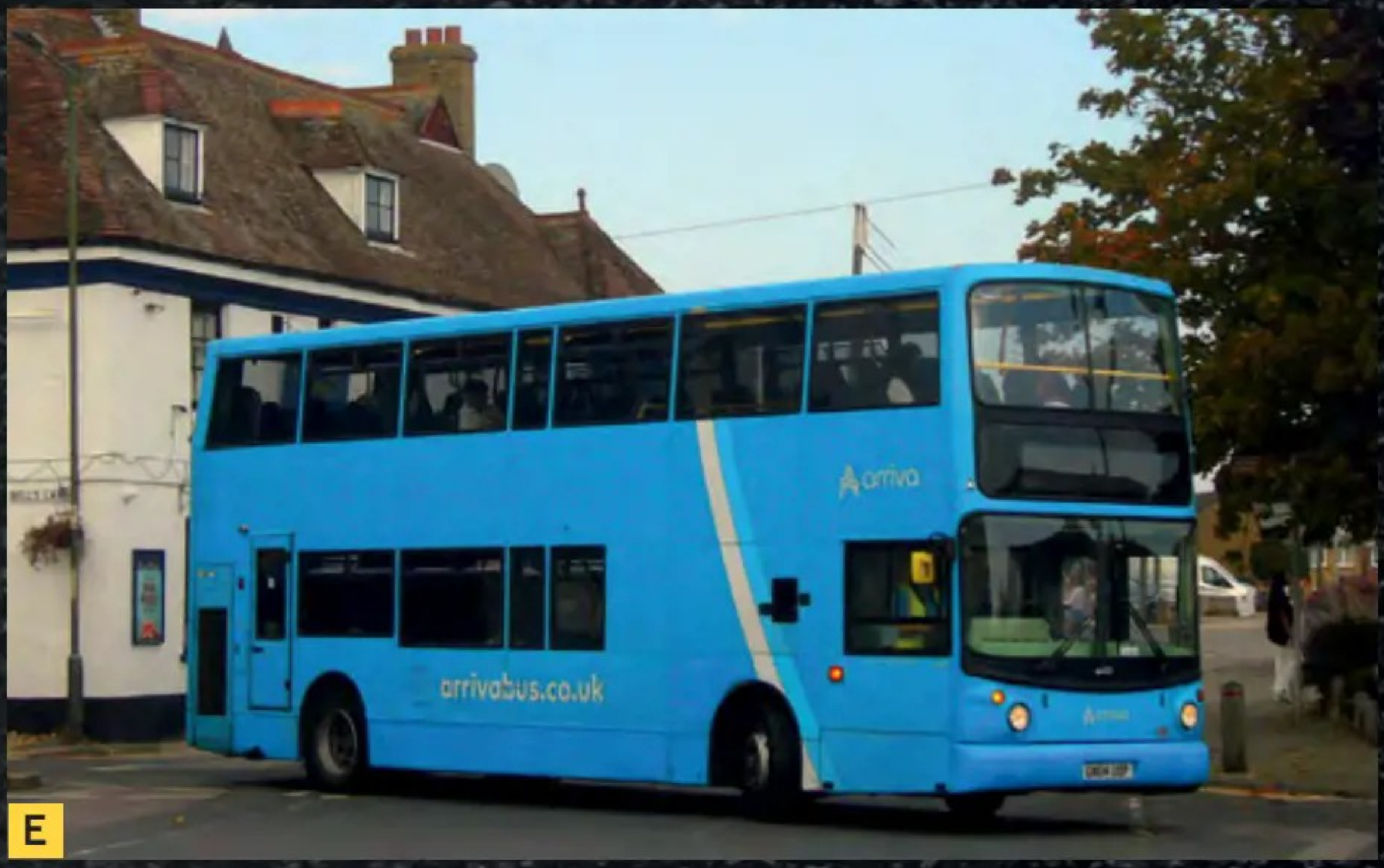
B


107 Vigo via West Kingsdown
REDROUTE BUSES
LW51 ZFO

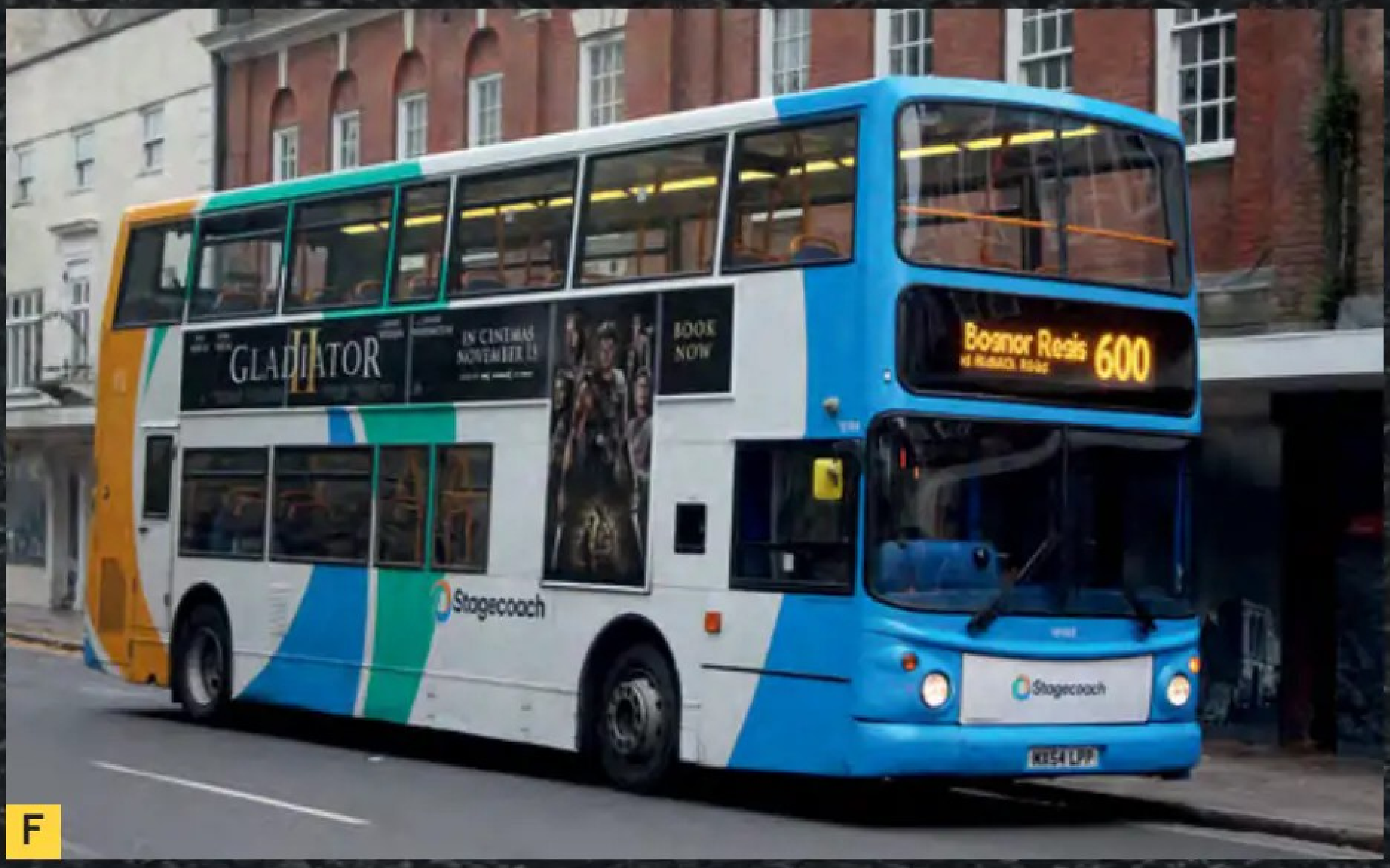
C


Coach of Langtoft

D


arriva
arrivabus.co.uk

E


GLADIATOR II
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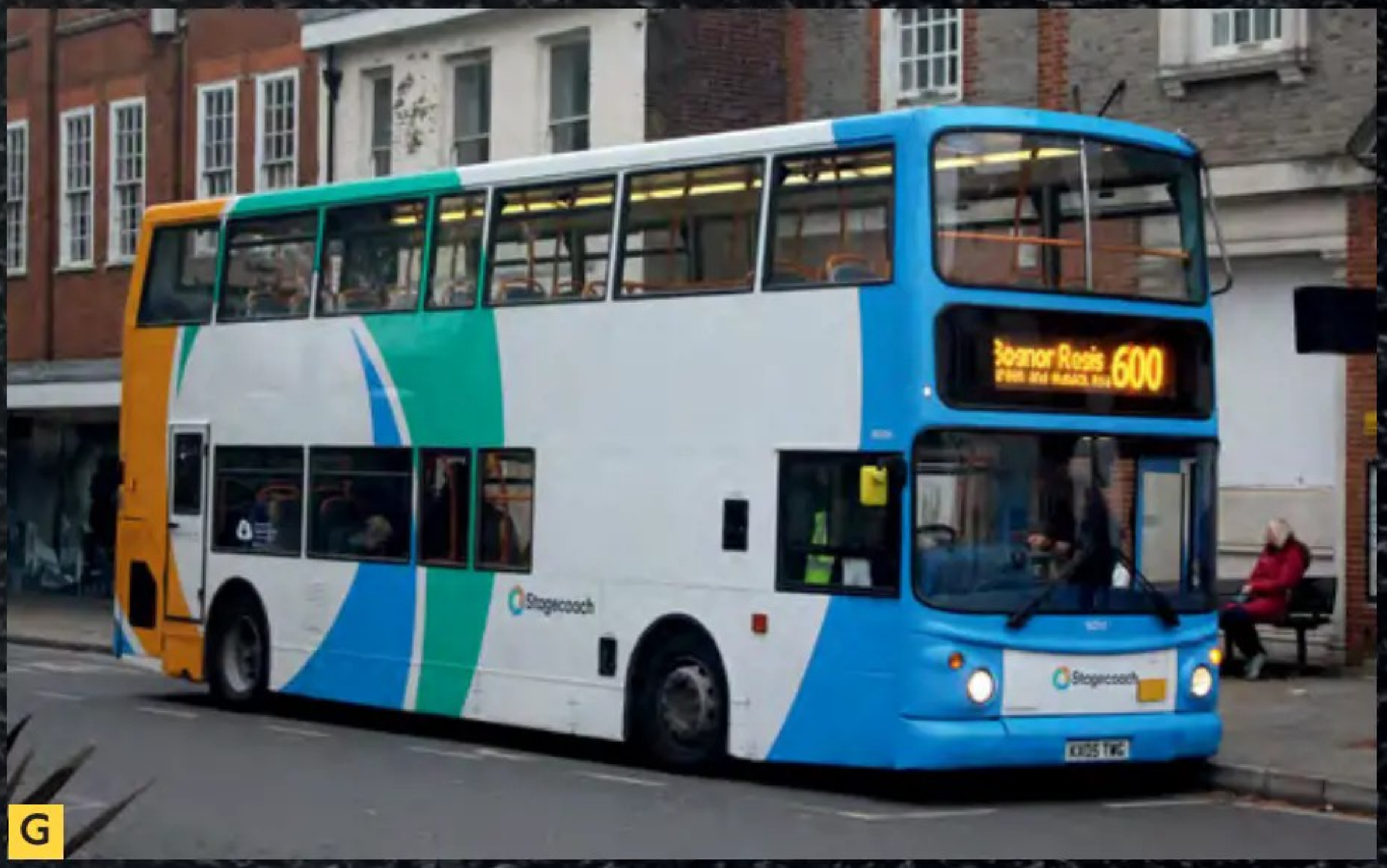
Bognor Regis 600
Stagecoach

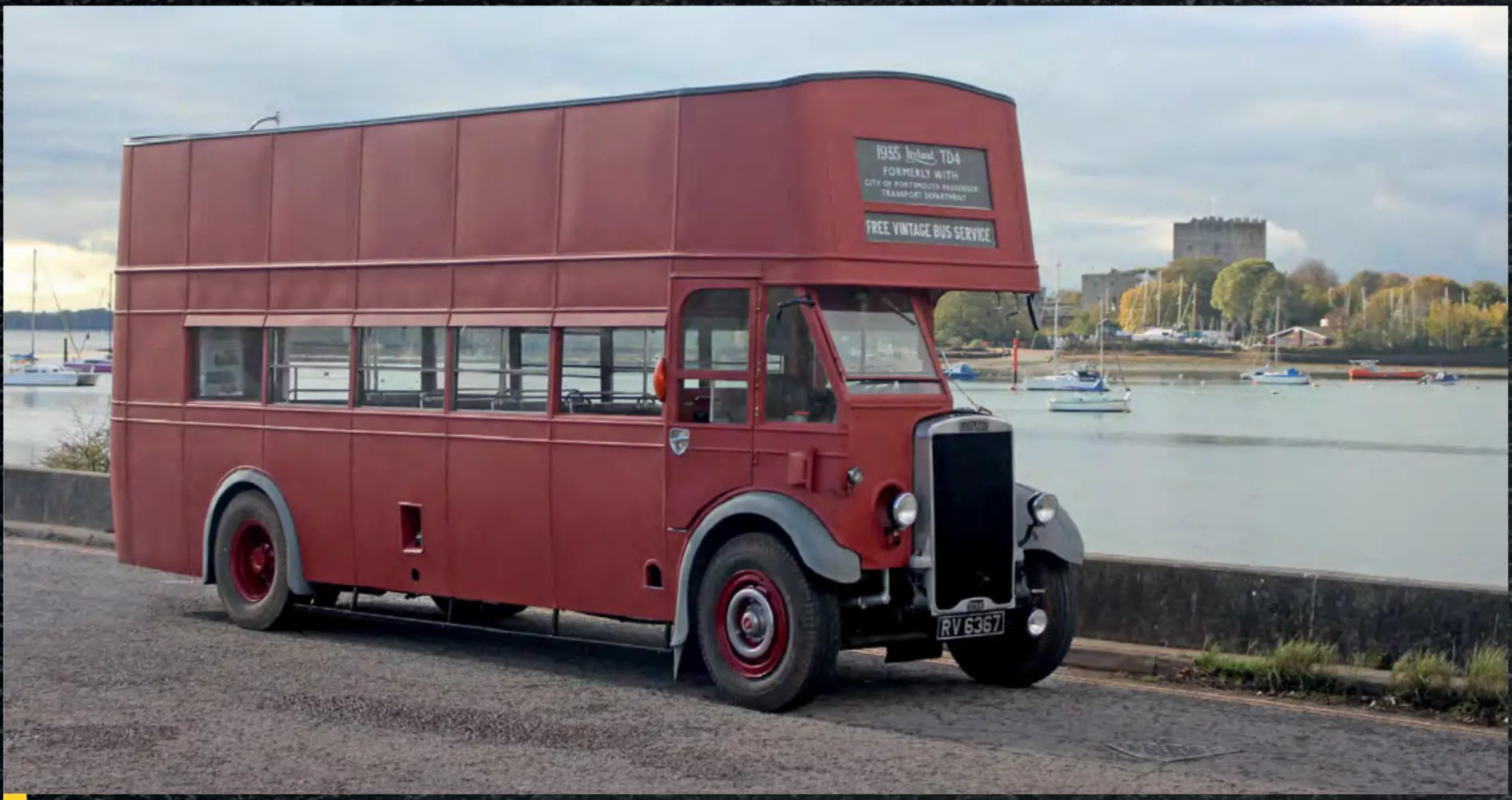
F


Bognor Regis 600
Stagecoach

G

Pictures: NIGEL APPLEFORD (a) / JEFF TUCKER (b & d) / JAMES OTLEY (c) / DAVID MITCHELL (e) / DAVID JUKES (f /g)

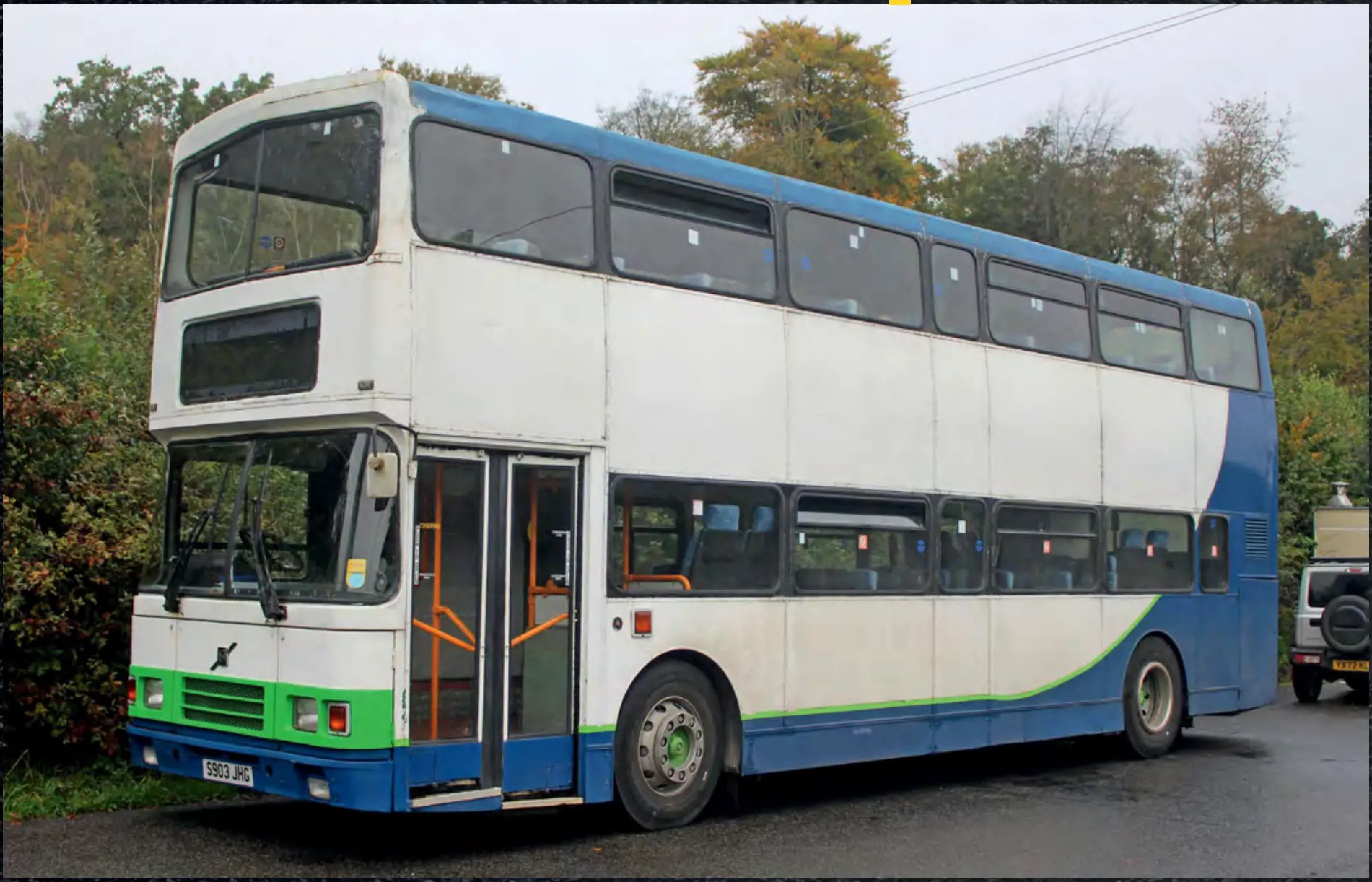
Picture: DAVID JUKES


1935 Leyland TD4
FORMERLY WITH
CITY OF PORTSMOUTH PASSENGER
TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT
FREE VINTAGE BUS SERVICE
RV 6367

NEARLY THERE
Volunteers from the City of Portsmouth Preserved Transport Depot's 'Tuesday Gang' took their latest restoration for a trial run in late-October. Former City of Portsmouth 7 (RV 6367), a 1935 English Electric-bodied Leyland Titan TD4 new to the operator in roofed form as its 124, was converted to open-top layout in 1954. The bus, awaiting application of Portsmouth's traditional red and white livery, is pictured alongside the upper reaches of Portsmouth Harbour with the medieval Portchester Castle across the water.

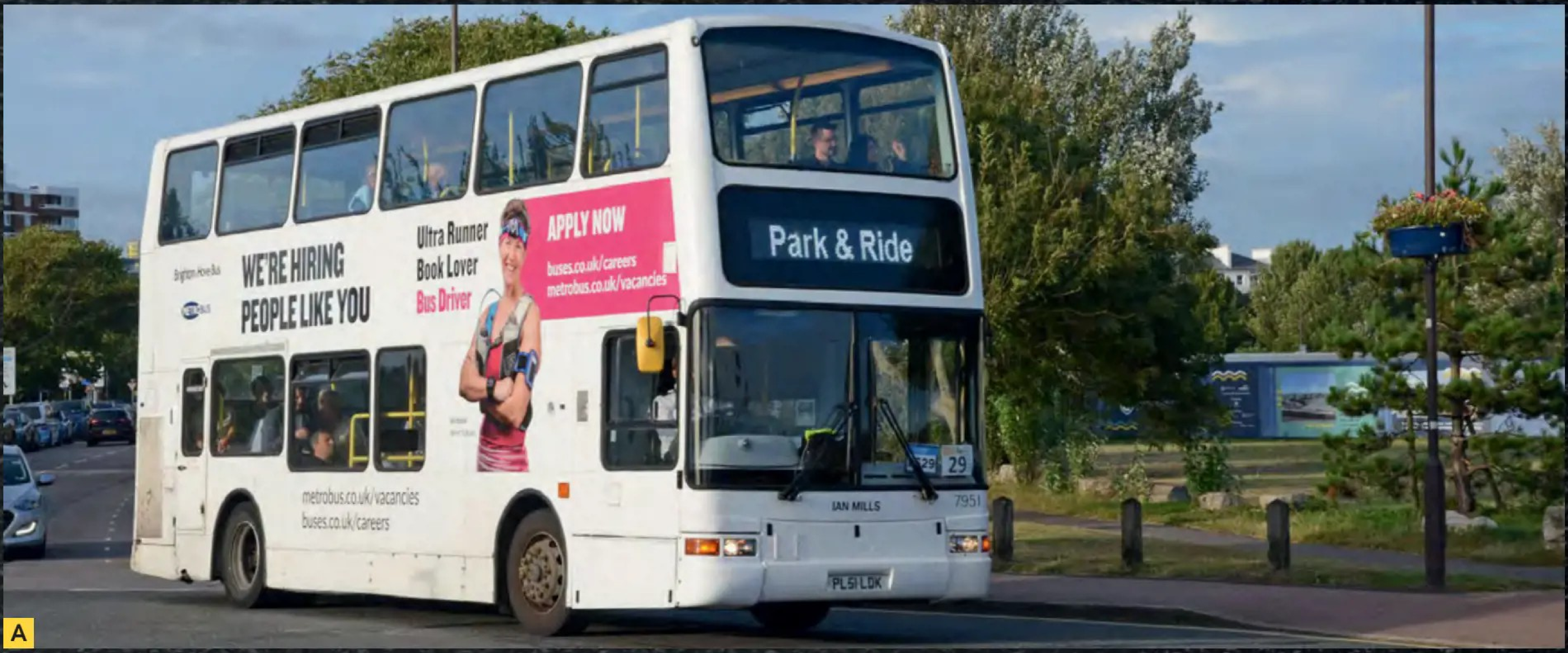
LUNCHTIME
Taking a break from school duties alongside the A32 in mid-Hampshire on 14 October is Cresta Coaches of Alresford S903 JHG, a 1998 Alexander RL-bodied Volvo Olympian new to Burnley & Pendle as its 2269. The bus carries the livery of its previous owner, N&U Travel of Garston, Liverpool.

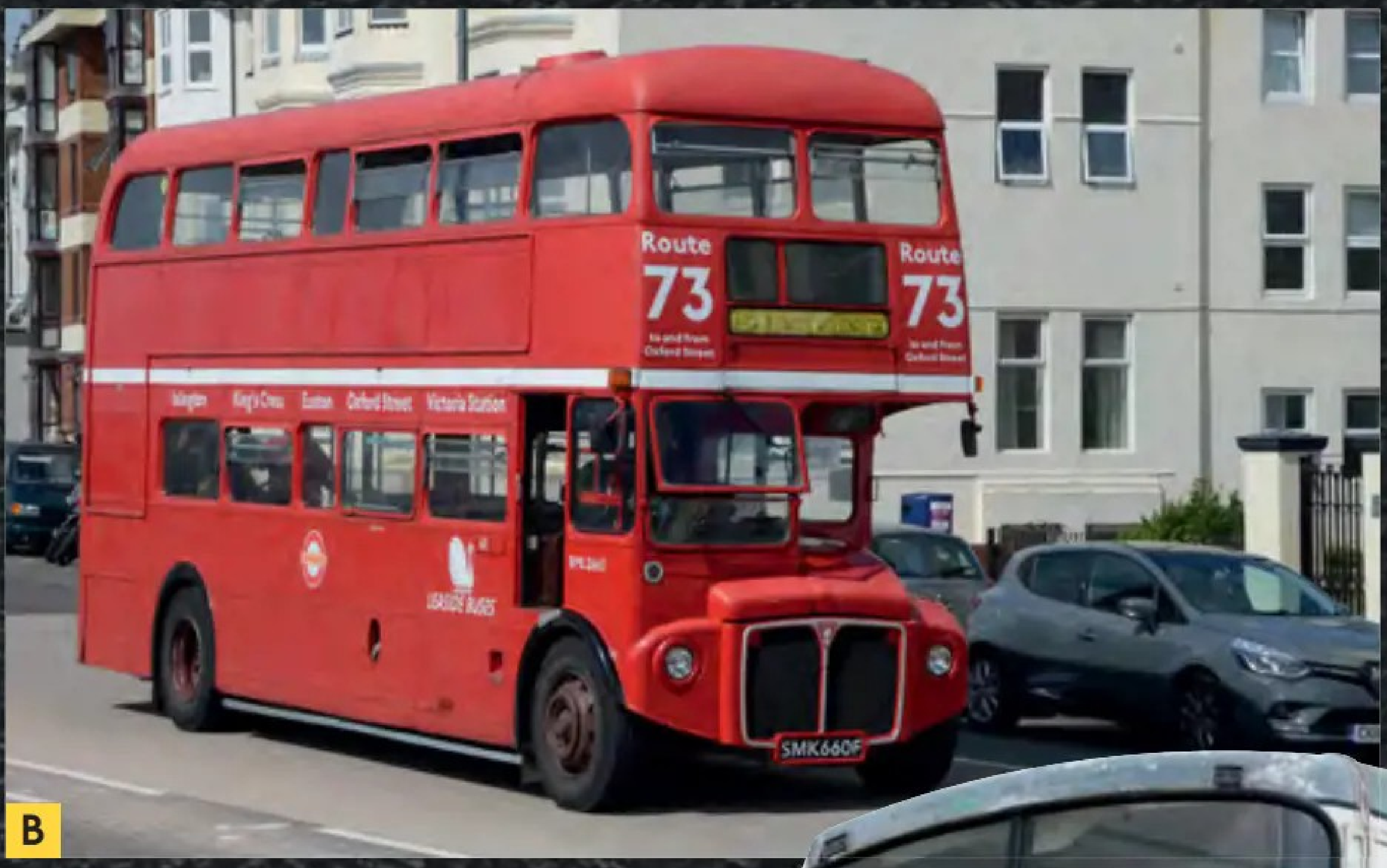
Picture: DAVID JUKES

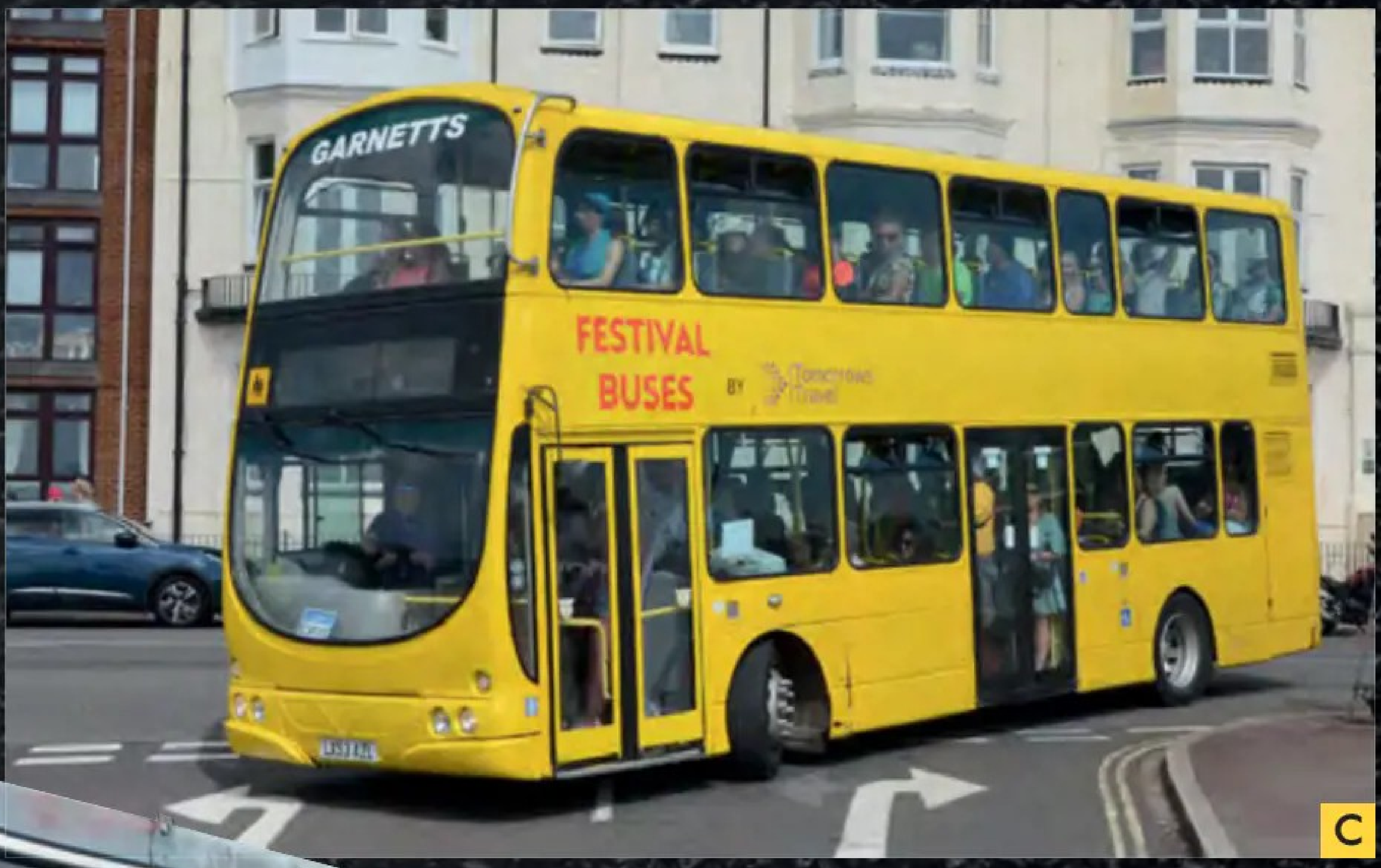


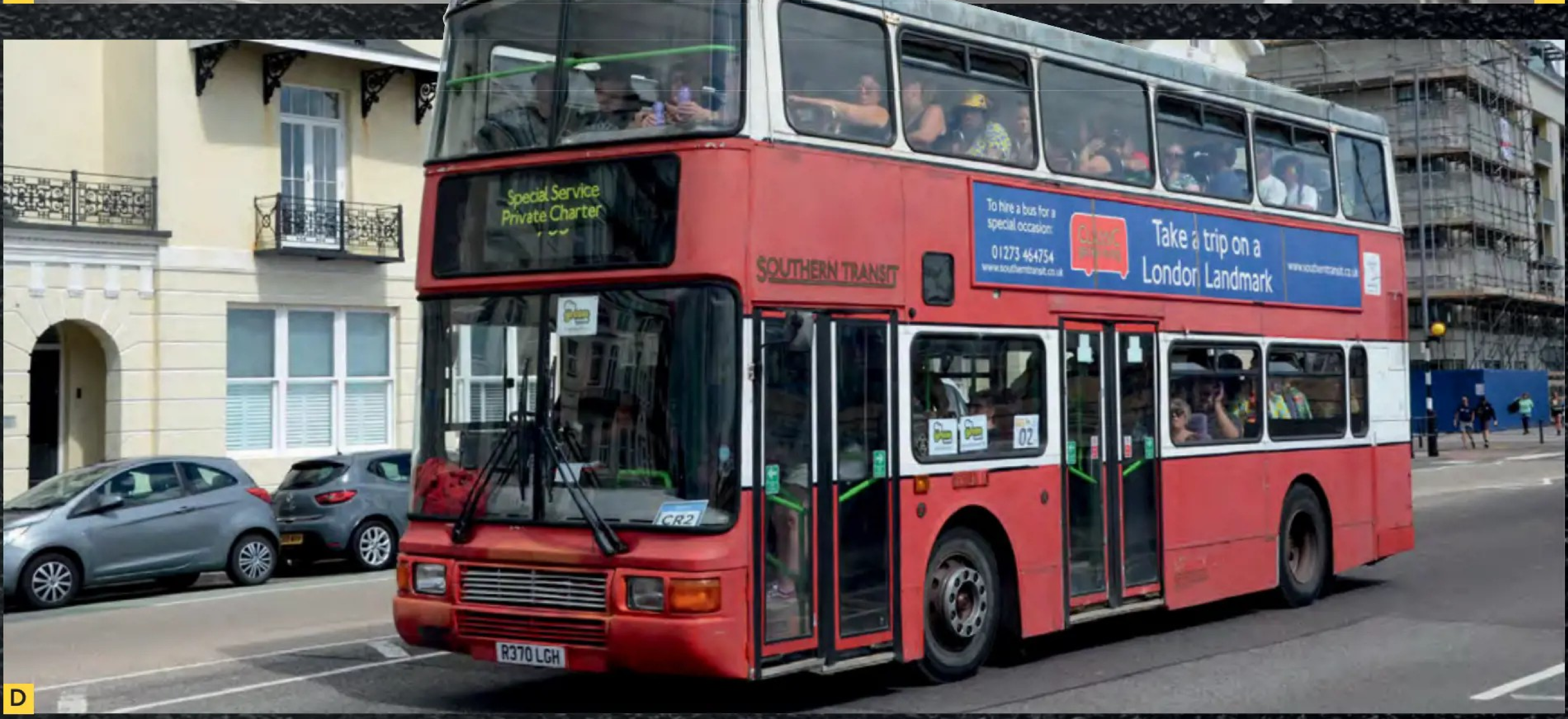
VICTORIOUS

The August Bank Holiday weekend's 'Victorious' music festival required the operation of various services linking the festival's site on Southsea Common with outlying campsites and car parks, and Portsmouth Harbour railway station. (A) Passing Clarence Pier on 23 August is Brighton & Hove 7951 (PL51 LDK), a 2002 Plaxton President-bodied Volvo B7TL new to London Central as its PVL251. Seen on South Parade two days later are: (B) Southern Transit RML2660 (SMK 660F), a 1967 Routemaster new to London Transport; (C) Tomorrows Travel of Horton, near Wimborne, LX53 AZL, a 2003 Wright Eclipse Gemini-bodied Volvo B7TL new to London General as its WVL136 – the Garnett's logo on the top screen belongs to the vehicle's previous Bishops Auckland-based owner; and (D) Southern Transit R370 LGH, a 1997 Northern Counties Palatine 2-bodied Volvo Olympian new to London General as its NV170 – with which it was rebuilt as a convertible open-topper in 2003.

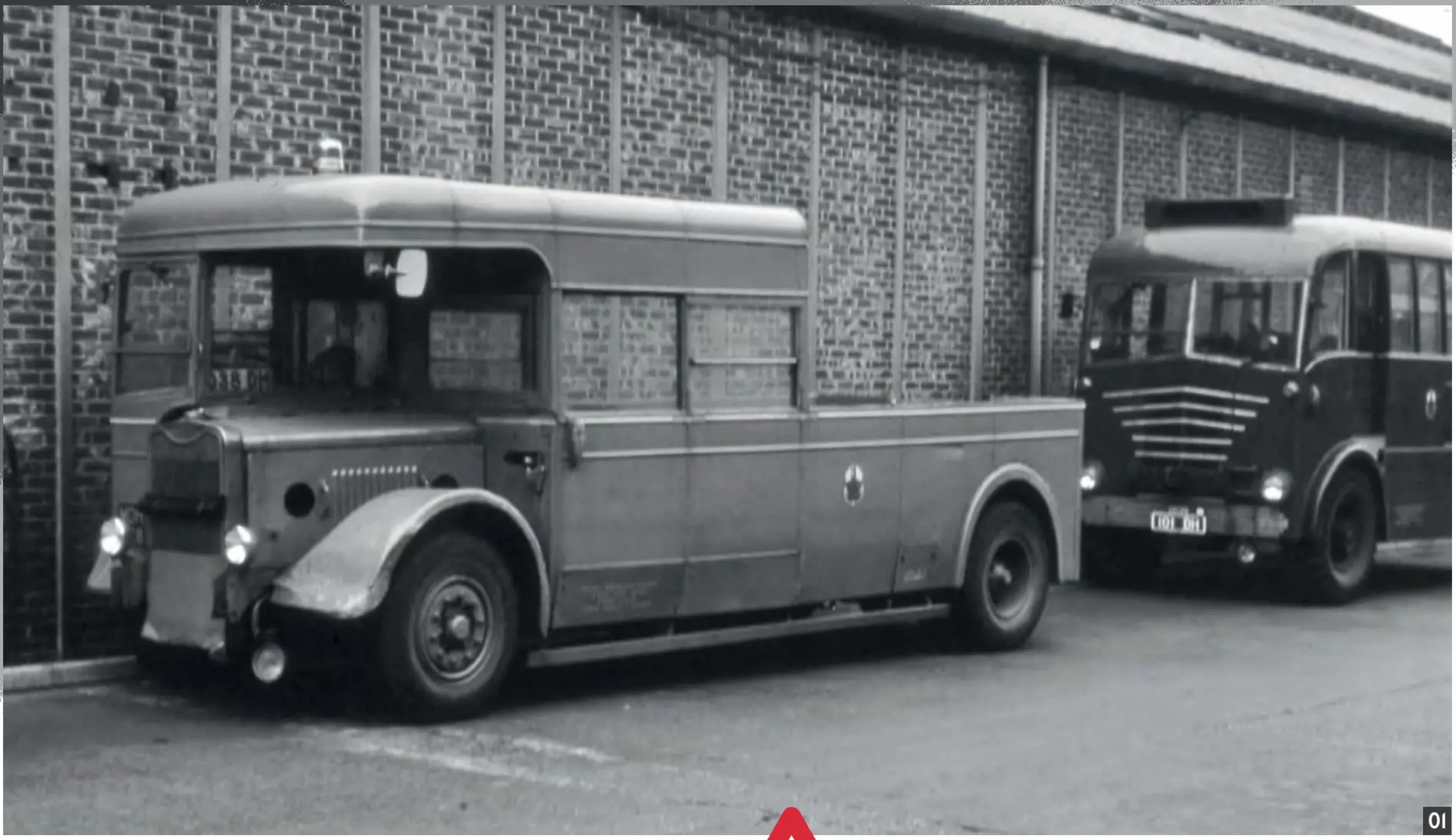

A
Park & Ride
WE'RE HIRING PEOPLE LIKE YOU
Ultra Runner Book Lover Bus Driver
APPLY NOW
buses.co.uk/careers
metrobus.co.uk/vacancies
29
PL51 LDK


B
Route 73
SMK660F


C
GARNETTS
FESTIVAL BUSES


D
Special Service Private Charter
SOUTHERN TRANSIT
Take a trip on a London Landmark
R370 LGH

Pictures: NIGEL APPLEFORD



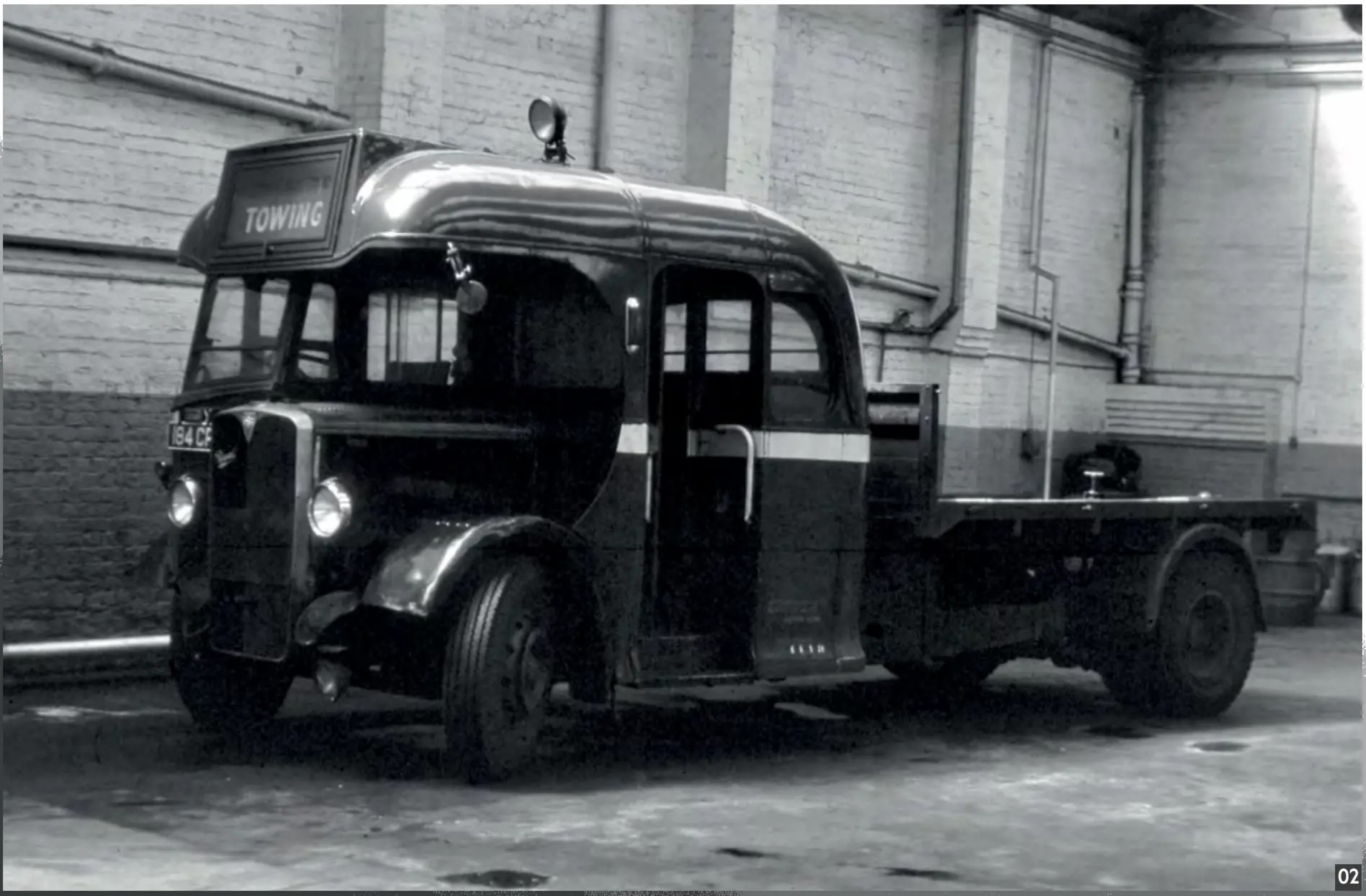
01

Recovery!

This month we bring you a selection of buses and coaches converted into recovery trucks.

01 In 1948/49 Walsall took delivery of 35 Park Royal-bodied Guy Aras IIIs, one of which, No 243 (MDH 328), was withdrawn from service in September 1963 and converted into a lorry/towing vehicle. It failed to be taken into the WMPTE fleet and was scrapped.

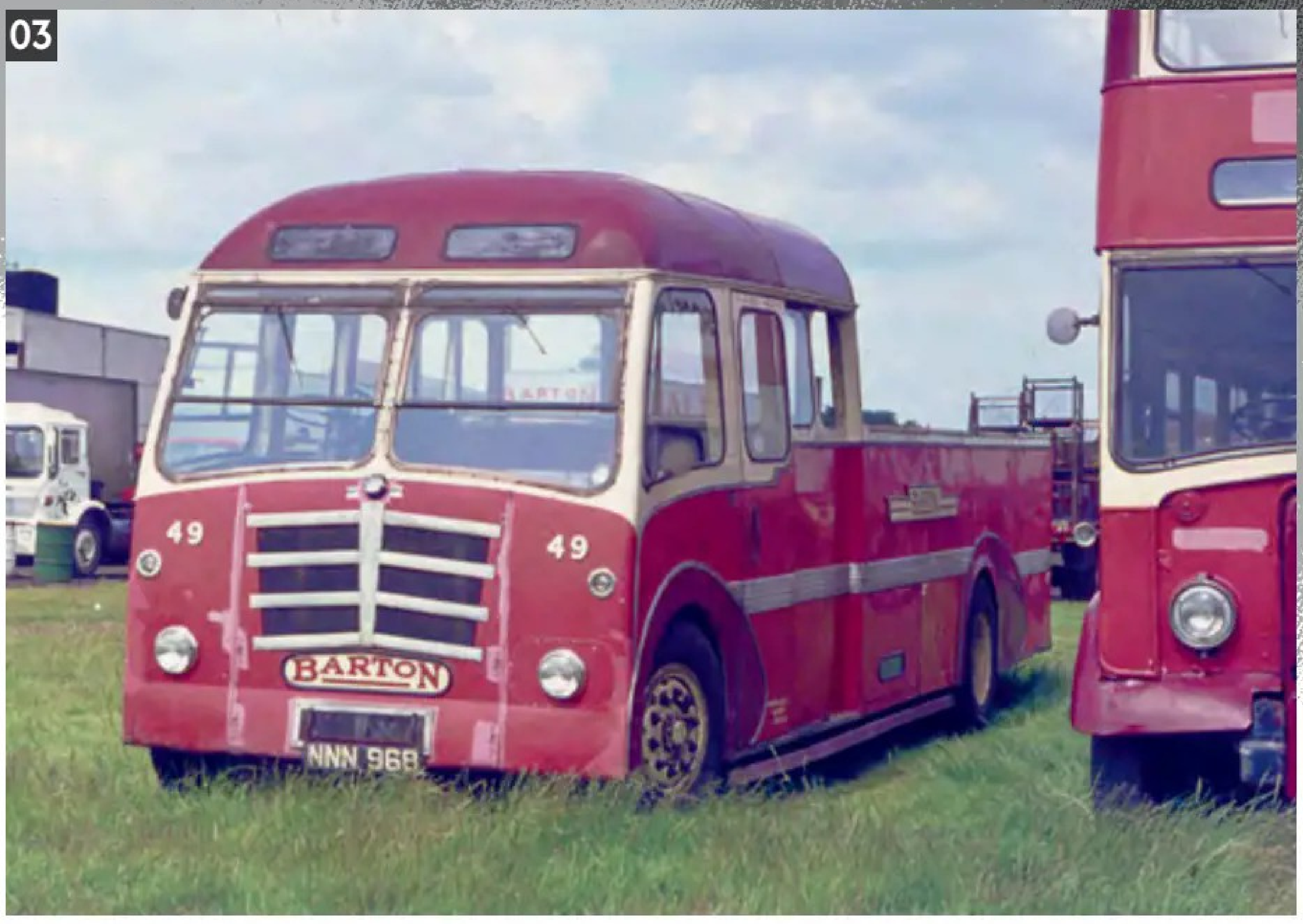
02 Now awaiting restoration, JX 9106 is a 1946 Weymann-bodied AEC Regal saloon originally numbered 181 in the Hebble fleet.

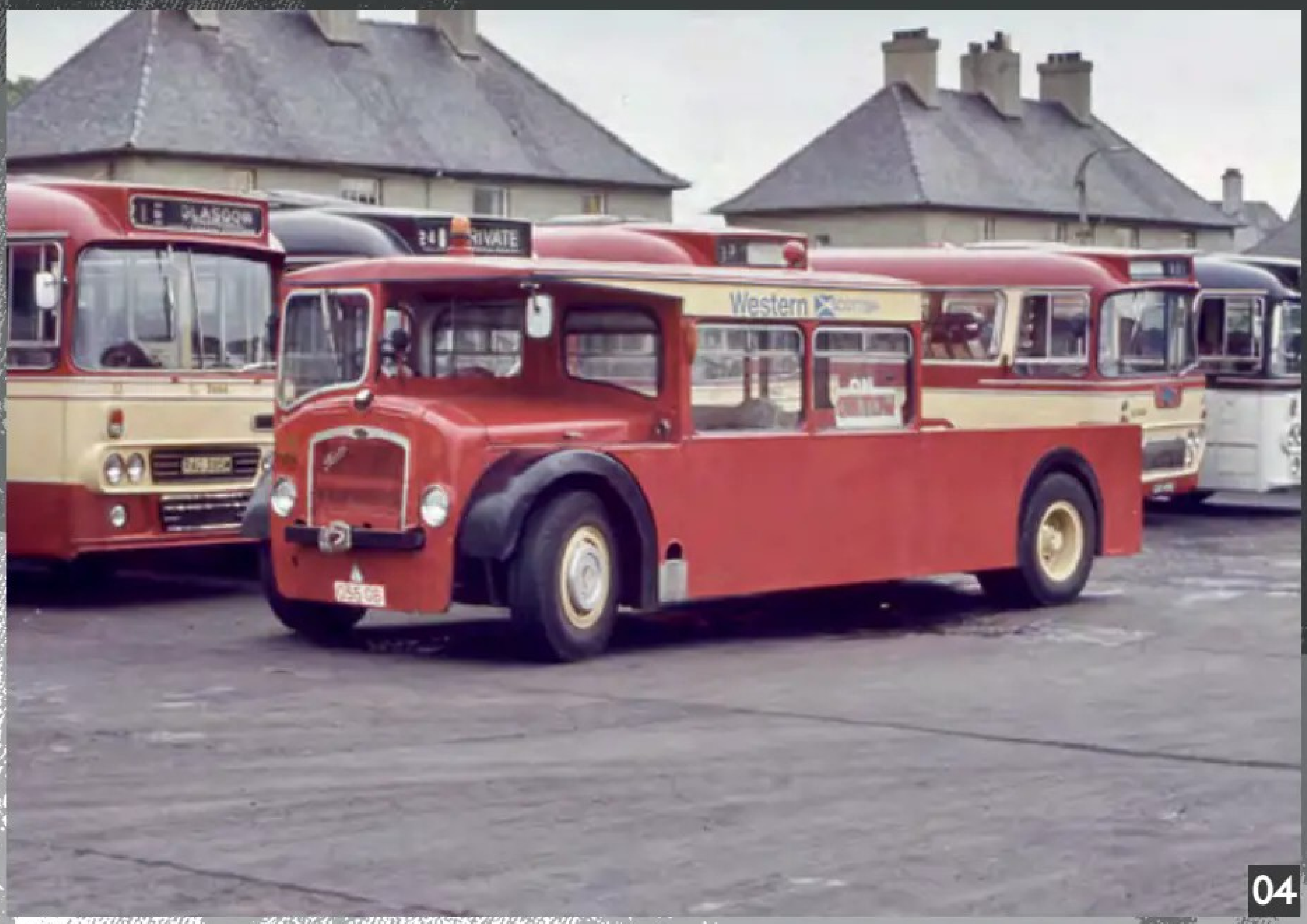


02

Pictures: PRESBUS ARCHIVE

03





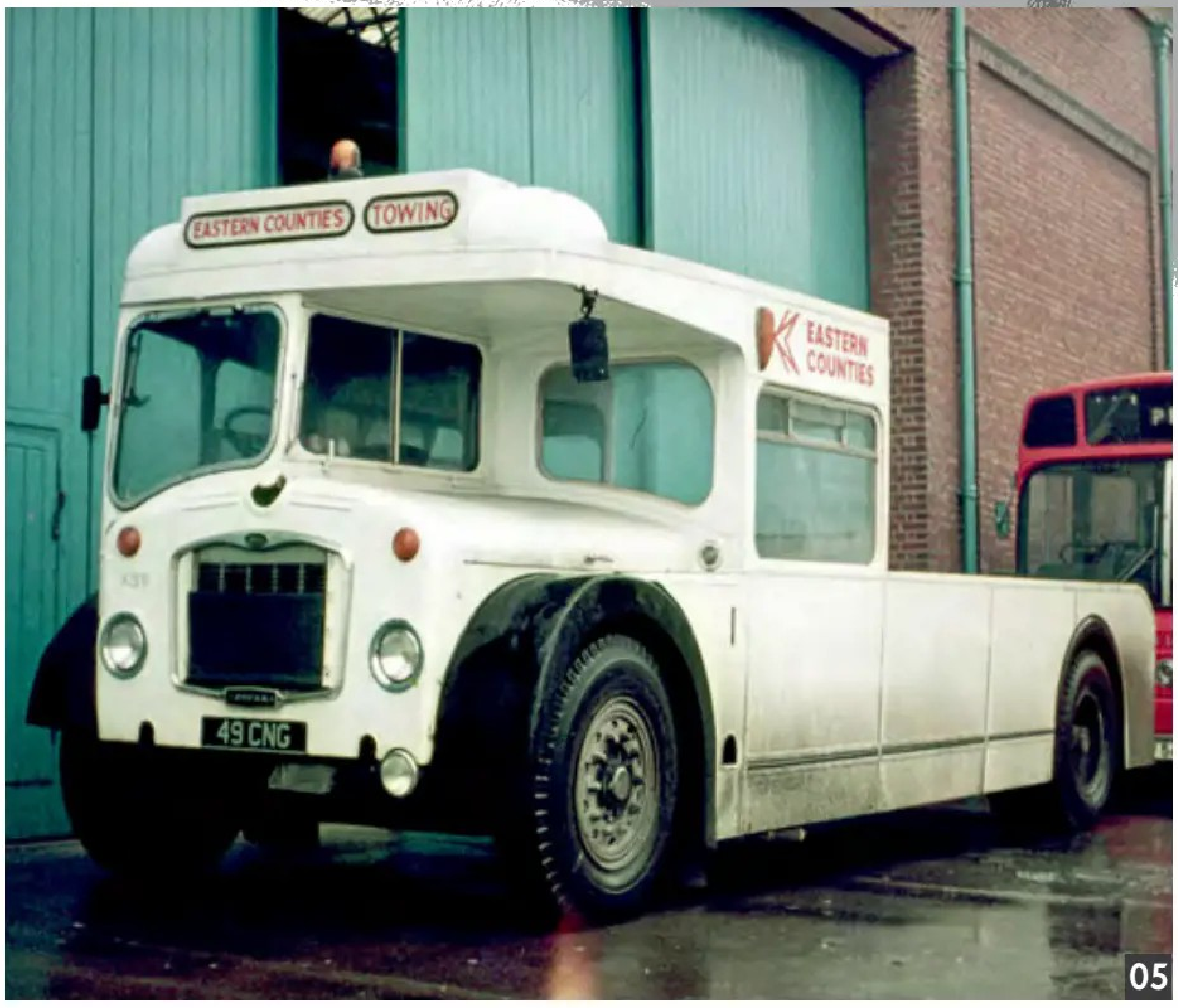
04

03 Three lives! NNN 968, seen at Chilwell in June 1979, is a Barton BTS/1, rebuilt in 1953 as a 39-seat coach from Leyland PD1A JAL 587. It was rebuilt again in March 1965, the result being this service vehicle with the primary purpose of transporting Barton's replica charabanc W 963 to events.

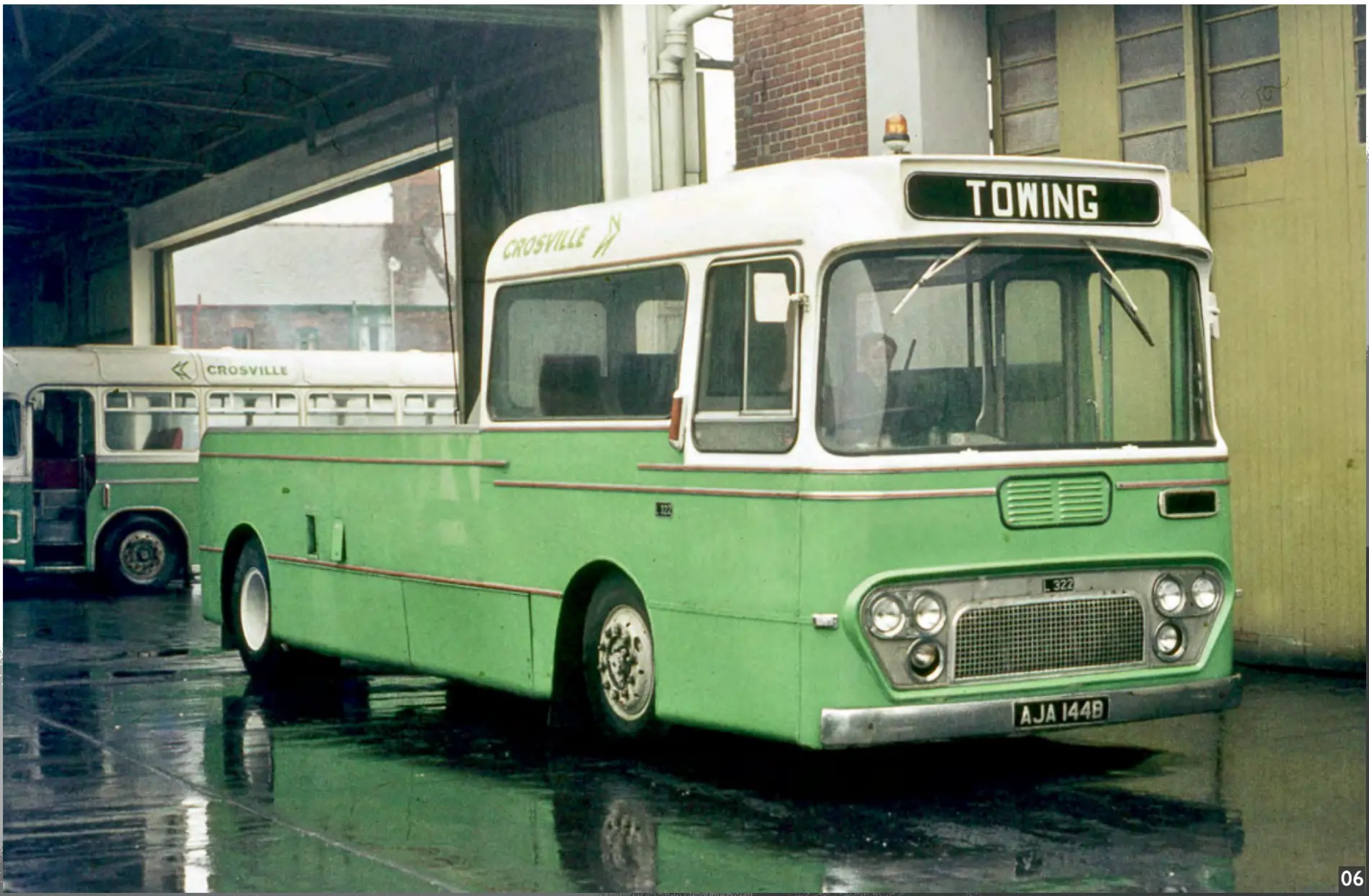
04 Meanwhile in Scotland, Western SMT's Inchinnen depot to be precise, we find, in September 1979, the former LCS 348 a 1958 Bristol LD6G.

05 Another Lodekka converted to a lorry/recovery vehicle was Eastern Counties 49 CNG, a 1963 Bristol FS5G named *Buzby*, and later re-registered AEW 262A, was scrapped in 1991. Its original registration is now on a Rolls Royce!

06 In 1972 North Western was split into three parts and sold off. As a consequence, a number of Alexander Y -type-bodied dual-purpose Leyland Leopards passed with territory in Cheshire to Crosville. These vehicles were alien to Crosville with many soon converted into recovery vehicles, replacing Bristol MWs. 1964-built AJA 144B is seen here in March 76. Following withdrawal from public service, it cut down as a recovery vehicles, which subsequently served Crosville throughout its NBC days and into privatisation. Normally allocated to Macclesfield, it is seen here at Crosville's Rock Ferry depot. It is now preserved.



05



06

18+

WHAT IS
AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME -

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
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18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

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AvaxHome - Your End Place

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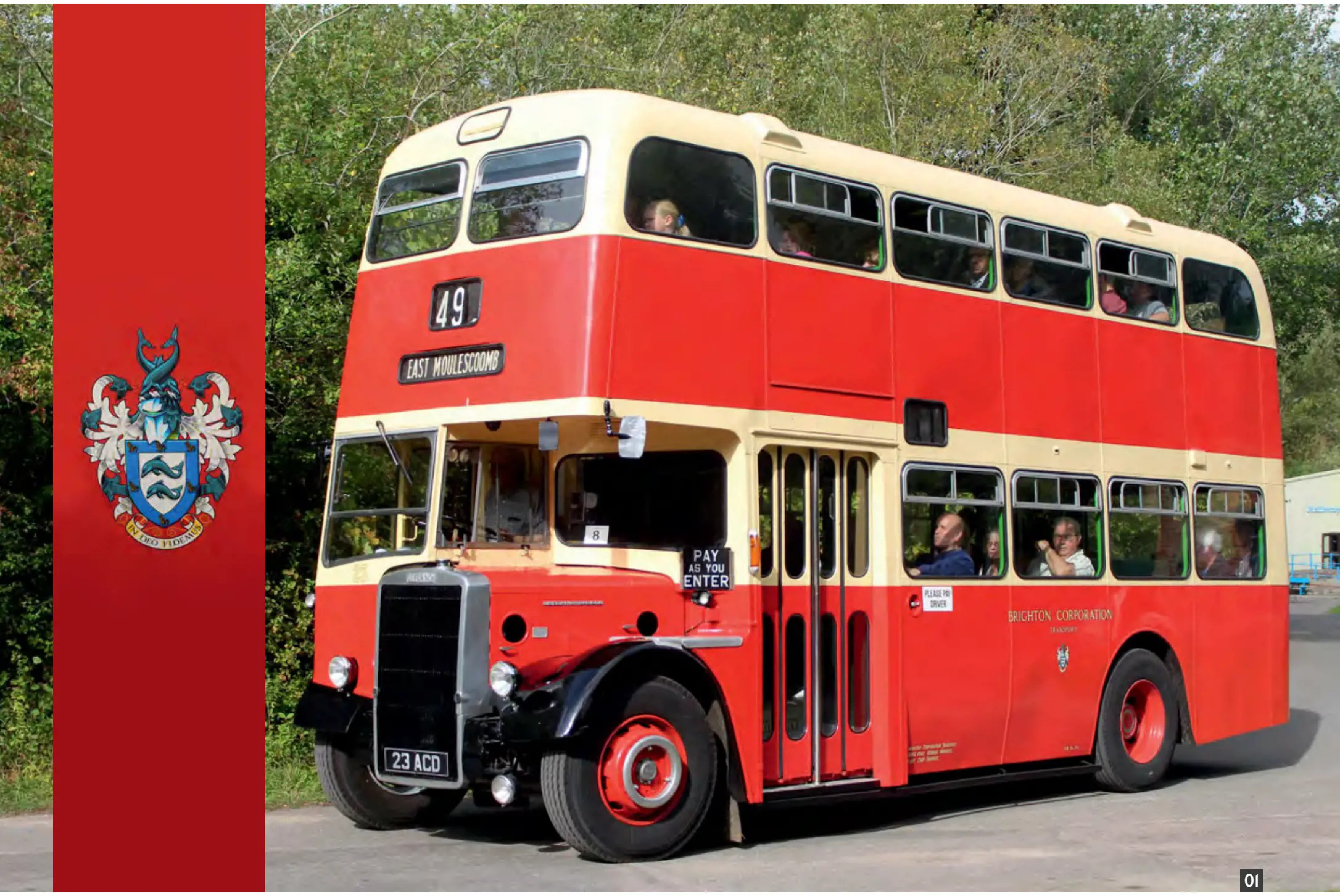


PD Pioneer

Brighton Corporation 23 (23 ACD), a 1962 Weymann-bodied Leyland Titan PD2/37, was the UK's first one-person-operated double-deck service bus. DAVID JUKES find out more.

The one-person-operation (OPO) of UK double-deck buses was first legalised in July 1966. It was then considered front-entrance rear-engined buses, such as the Leyland Atlantean and Daimler Fleetline, would be obvious vehicles for running without a conductor, but Brighton Corporation's General Manager, Eric Kay, had other ideas.

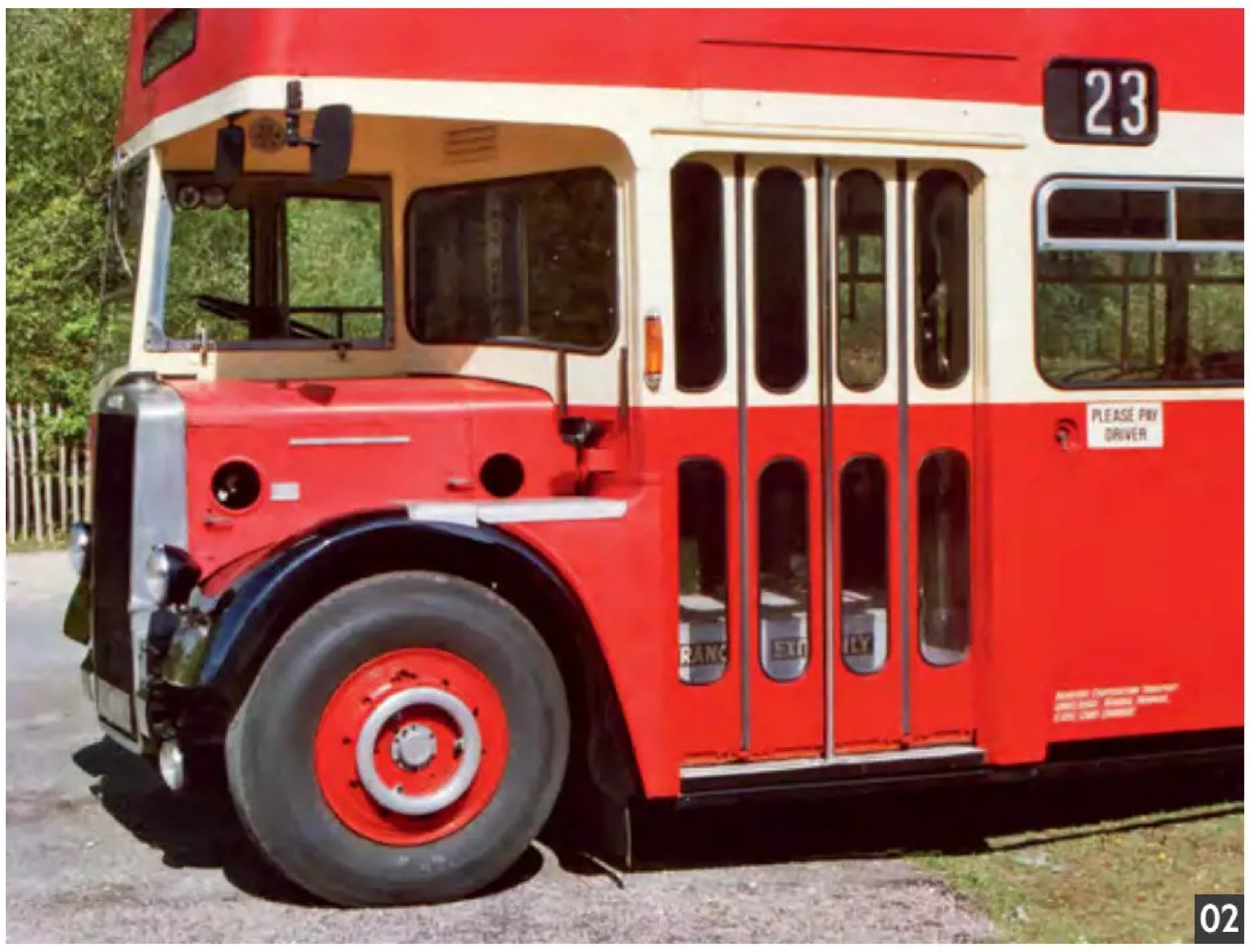
He wanted to cut costs but had 30 forward entrance PD2s in service ranging in age from one to five years, all of which were expected to have a working life of 15 years. Brighton Corporation was probably not then in a position to purchase any new rear-engined double-deckers so Eric Kay had to make OPO work using the PD2s. Negotiations with the unions proved successful and led to an initial trial conversion.

Mr Kay had 23 (23 ACD), a 1962 forward entrance Weymann 'Aurora'-bodied Leyland Titan PD2/37 that was first registered on 1 January 1963, converted in the Corporation's Lewes Road workshops into an OPO bus before the new legislation was introduced (the 'Aurora' is the forward entrance equivalent of the more common rear entrance 'Orion' bodywork, both types built by Metro-Cammell and Weymann from 1956 to 1968 and 1966 respectively). The conversion saw the nearside front bulkhead angled forward with an aperture provided to enable ticket machine installation and communication between driver and passenger. Additional mirrors were added to improve the driver's visibility of the lower-deck, as was a periscope to enable viewing of the upper-deck.

The work also included a staircase electric eye detector to detect the number of passengers travelling upstairs and, hence, how many vacant seats were available — something not immediately visible to the driver through the newly-installed periscope. Suitable notices were also applied exhorting passengers to pay on entry, most prominent being those installed either side of the forward

01 No 23 assisted operation of Amberley Museum's internal bus service during its Autumn Bus Day on 24 September 2023. Brighton Corporation's red and cream external livery was accompanied by a green-based interior, part of which may be detected on the window pillars.
To the left is the Brighton Corporation crest.

Pictures: **DAVID JUKES**



PLEASE PAY DRIVER
03

entrance, the front bulkhead plate could be removed when the bus was running with a two-person crew. And if that wasn't sufficient, the rear destination blind included a 'Pay as you enter' display.

The newly-converted 23 was shown to the Brighton Corporation Transport Committee and press on 31 May 1966 before it was tried in service, with a conductor present, on 15 June, when a trial run was made over former trolleybus routes 26A and 46A (Old Steine–Preston Drove). Further modifications were required, including the replacement of the original Bell Punch ticket machine with a Solomatic, before 23 re-entered service during August 1966, still with a conductor.

ONE-PERSON-OPERATION

No 23's conversion proved a success, leading to the similar conversions of identical Nos 21/2/4/2/9 (21/2/4/5 ACD, BUF 529C) using Setright ticket machines (23 was so fitted in 1967) and without an electric eye detector. This enabled the full OPO conversion of routes 26A and 46A from Sunday 11 September 1966, the UK's first regular double-deck OPO bus service. Drivers were paid an additional 16% for working these duties.

Brighton's remaining forward-entrance Titans were converted to OPO in 1968/69 to enable their operation on other services. The final deliveries of front-engined forward-entrance buses were received in 1968: five Leyland Titan PD3/4s with bodywork manufactured at the Beaumaris factory of Cammell Laird (Anglesey) Ltd to Metro-Cammell-Weymann's Aurora design, Nos 31-5 (LUF 131-3F, MCD 134/5F). Both companies then formed part of the Laird Group, the diverted order being intended to reduce pressure on Metro-Cammell's Elmdon factory; Weymann's Addlestone factory having closed in 1966. These were either built as OPO buses or were thus converted very soon after delivery — sources differ!

The PD2s and PD3s were repainted in Brighton Corporation's post-1970 light French blue and white

02 A 2006 close-up of 23's nearside front showing the angled front bulkhead and most of the OPO-related signage (the bulkhead-mounted 'Pay as you enter' sign is not in its brackets to deter the light-fingered).

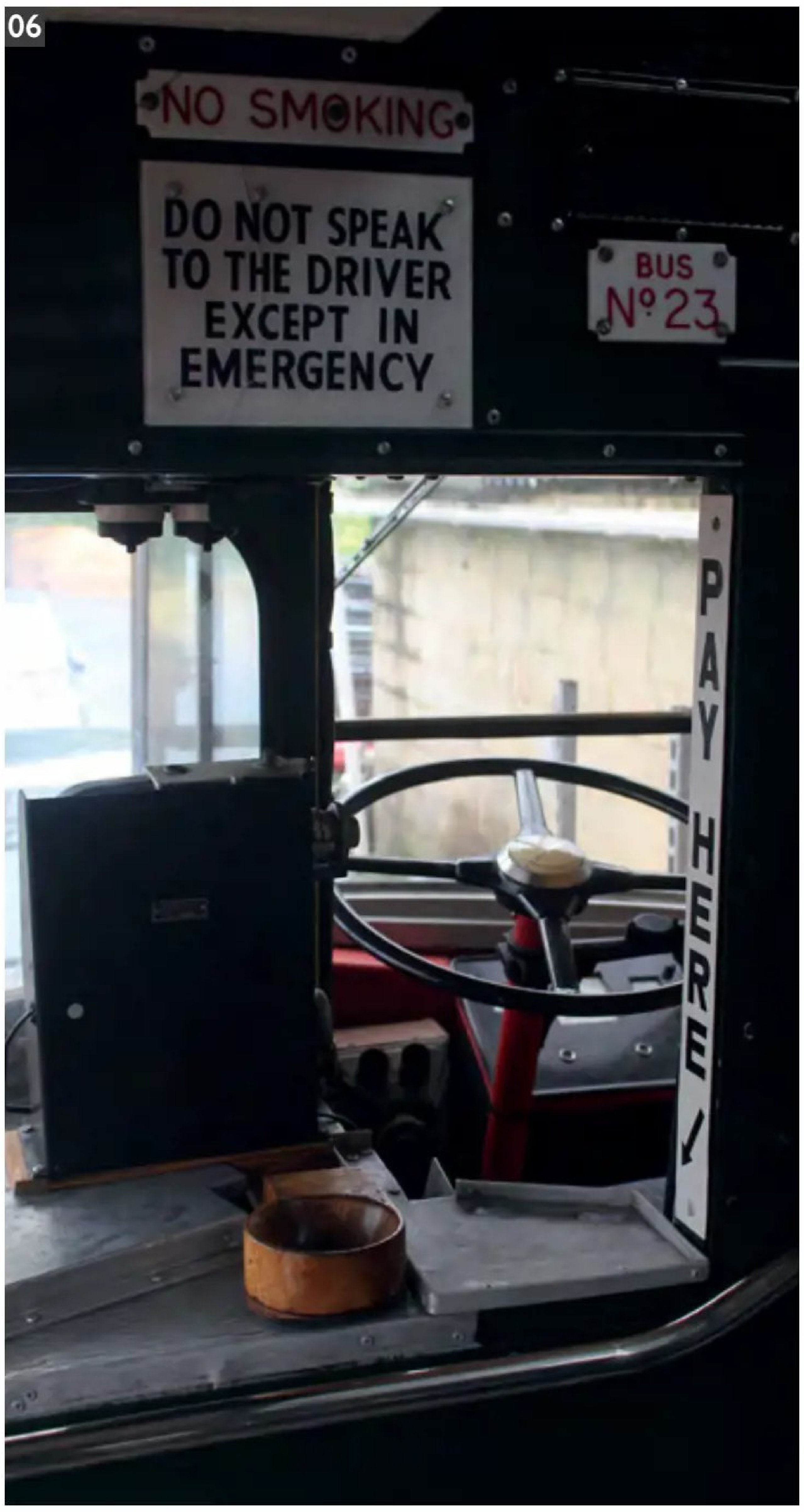
03 This sign is a permanent fixture next to the forward entrance.

04 No 23's lower saloon is very smartly presented owing to its recent refurbishment.

05 As does the upper-deck. Note the slightly narrower seats located alongside the staircase.

Fleetnumber	New	OPO Conversion	Withdrawn
1-16 (5001-16 CD)	1961	1968 (1/4/10/2-4) 1969 (2/3/5-9/11/5/6)	1975 (9), 1976 (2/4-7), 1977 (1/3/8/10/1/4), 1978 (12/3/5/6)
17-20 (DCD 17-20C)	1965	1968	1977 (17/18) 1981 (19/20)
21-7 (21-4 ACD, 25-7 CCD)	1962/63	1966 (21-5) 1967 (27) 1968 (26)	1978
28-30 (BUF 528-30C)	1965	1966 (29) 1968 (28/30)	1978
31-5 (LUF 131-3F, MCD 134/5F)*	1968	1968	1981 (31) 1988 (33) 1993 (32/4/5)

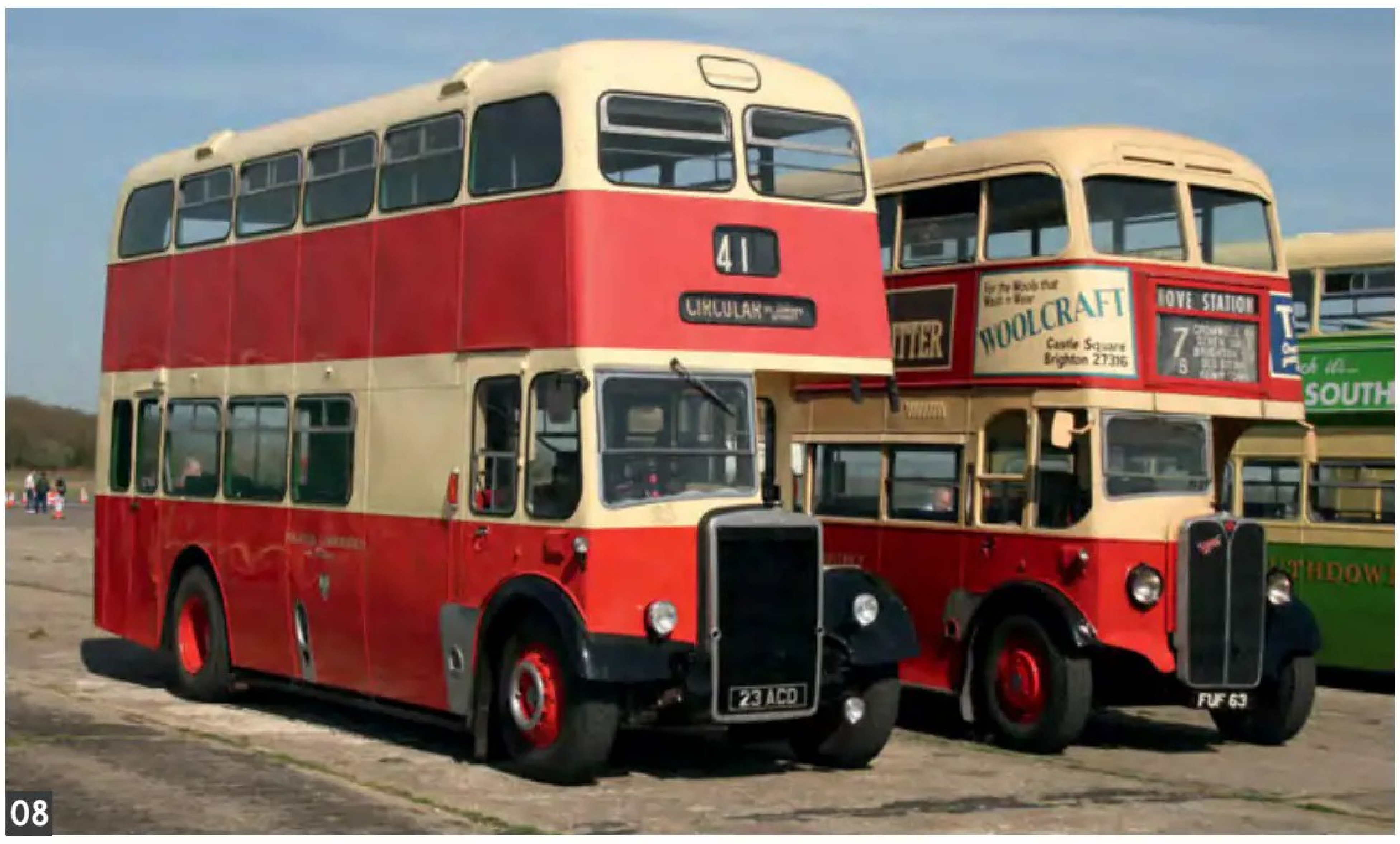
*Cammell Laird Aurora-bodied PD3/4, otherwise Weymann Aurora-bodied PD2/37



06 A passenger's view of the OPO conversion showing ticket machine and transaction area. One assumes a passenger was permitted to speak to the driver when announcing their destination and paying the fare!

PASSENGERS ENTERING OR LEAVING THE BUS WHILE IN MOTION DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK.

07 An original notice remains on the front bulkhead next to the passenger doors.



08 The 2011 Cobham Bus Museum's Spring Gathering was held at Dunsfold Airfield on 10 April owing to the non-availability of its usual Wisley venue. Showing off Brighton Corporation's smart red and cream livery are 23 and 63 (FUF 63), a 1939 Weymann-bodied AEC Regent. The latter is festooned with period advertisements as Brighton Corporation was renowned for treating its buses as mobile billboards; 23 was similarly treated during its service with the operator, but Duncan Richardson prefers the unadorned look in preservation.

livery before withdrawal during the 1970s and 1980s.

There were two further forward-entrance Leyland Titan PD2/37s in the Brighton fleet, both 1970 conversions of rear-entrance Weymann 'Orion'-bodied buses of 1959 vintage. Neither entered service as MoT certification was not granted. No 52 (WCD 52) was converted to forward-entrance and forward staircase layout, but this was not considered cost-effective. No 77 (WCD 77) was converted to forward-entrance but with its rear staircase left in place and lower-deck seating rearranged to a perimeter layout.

NO 23 (23 ACD)

Pioneer OPO conversion 23 was withdrawn in 1978 and passed to John Goddard for preservation. It was re-liveried in Brighton Corporation red and cream and signwritten on both sides to announce its status as the UK's first OPO double-deck bus. The bus, retaining Brighton livery and most of its signwriting, was later operated by Court's Coaches of Fillongley, near Coventry, on schools and driver-training duties from 1986. The latter required the insertion of a window into the staircase panel to improve the driving instructor's visibility.

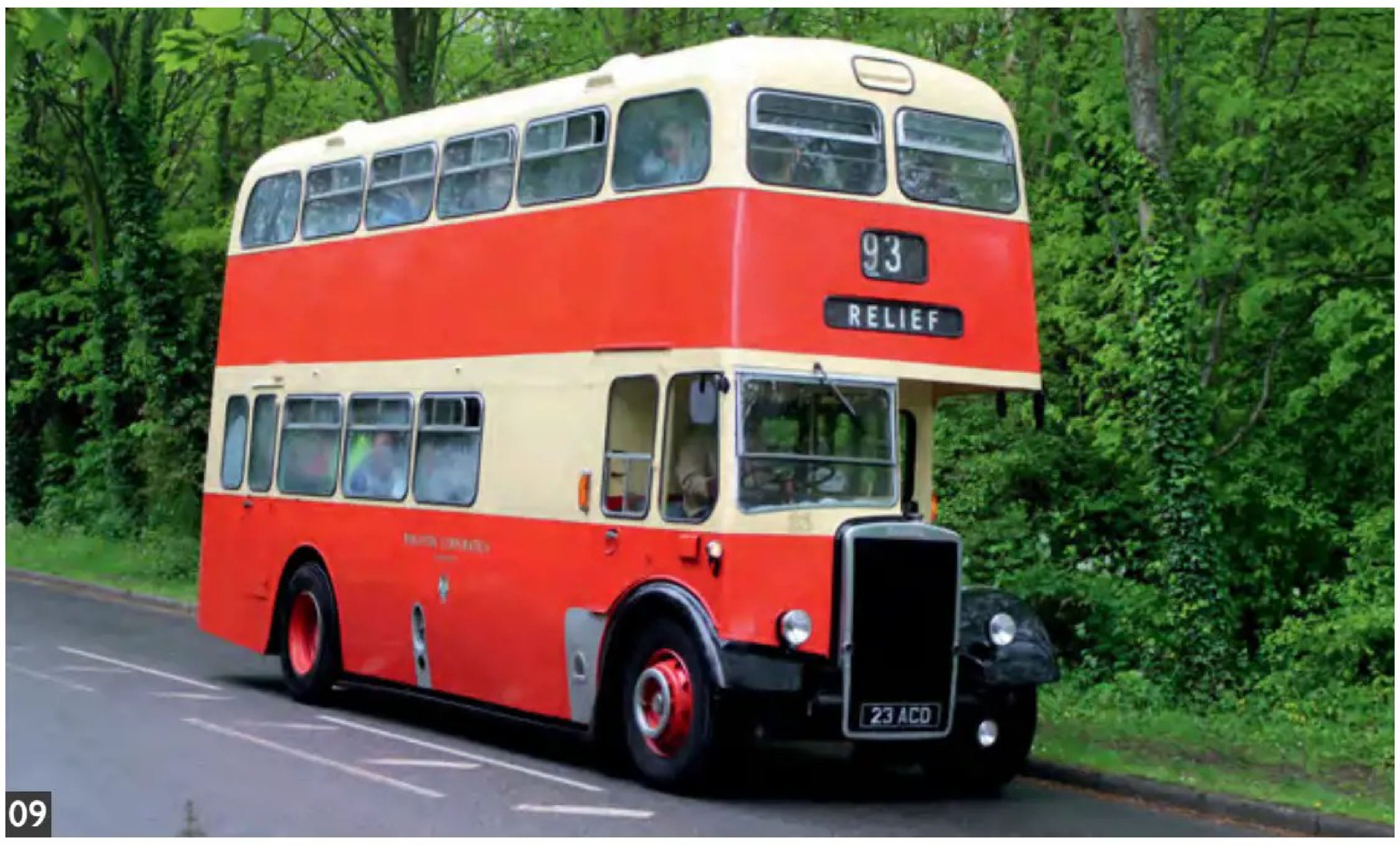
PRESERVED AGAIN

Sister vehicle 30 (BUF 530C) also formed part of the preservation scene following its withdrawal from passenger service. Duncan Richardson assisted its then-owner with the Titan's upkeep but decided to acquire his own bus instead: 'My research proved No 23 still existed and, knowing its history, I wanted to acquire it, which I was to do from Court's in July 1991,' he recalls. 'They were going to separate the vehicle and registration, so I bought both — £1,500 for the bus and £1,000 for the registration.'

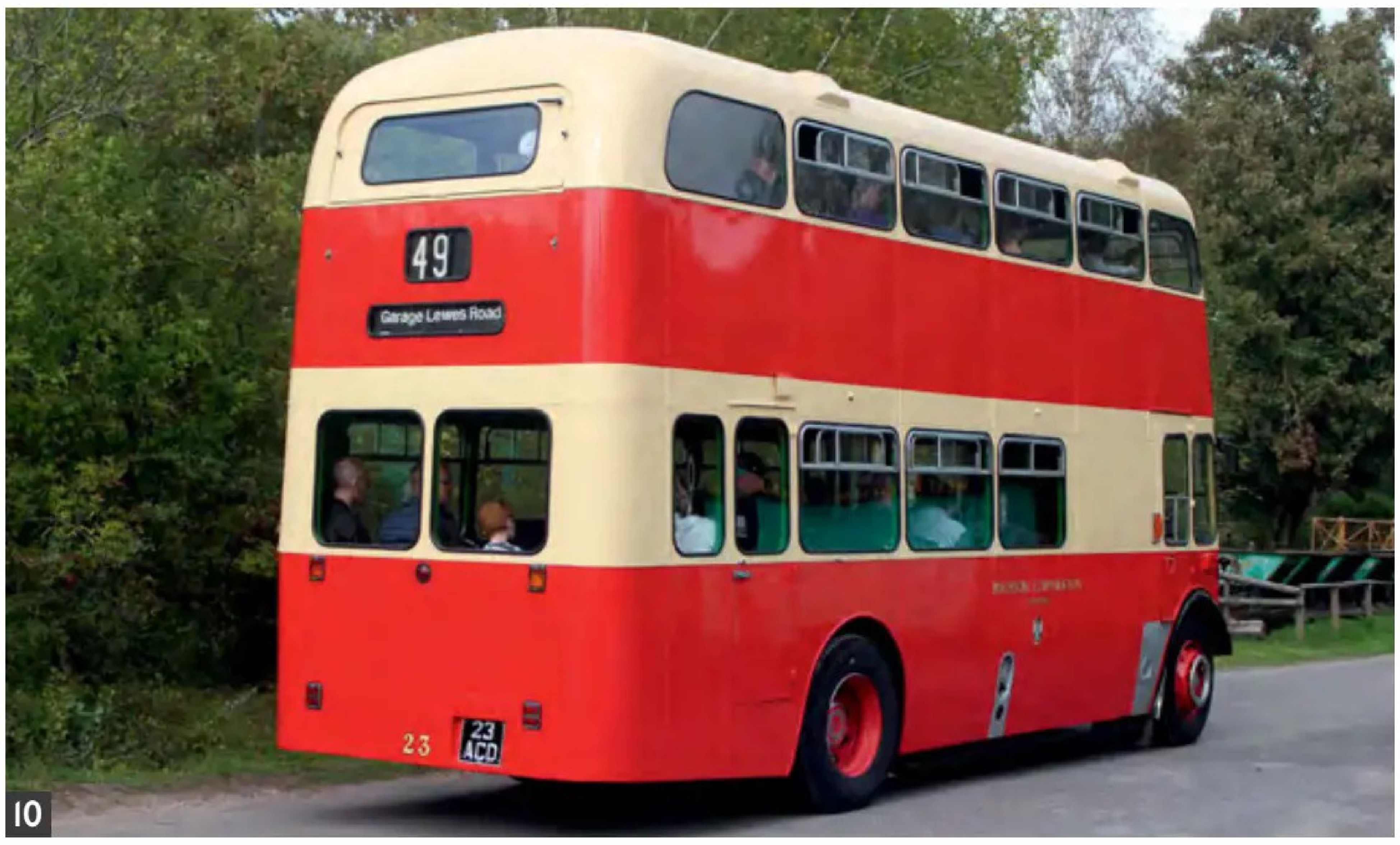
No 23 was sold with a new Class 5 MoT and the upper-deck seating loosely stored as work on the upper-deck floor was intended but never carried out. The OPO equipment had also been removed from the cab area and was found stored downstairs under the rear bench seat, complete with all signs and notices.

Duncan had also looked at sisters 21 and 24, both of which were used for berry pickers' transport in Scotland. Both were runners although distance and condition dissuaded Duncan from buying either — 21's engine coolant contained oil and 24 had holes in its floors. And both had missing windows replaced with metal plating. Also present was former Southdown PD3/4 954 CUF, which was subsequently acquired by others and now forms part of the South Coast Motors fleet.

No 23 was driven from Coventry to Christ's Hospital, near Horsham, where a storage barn was available. The bus was tidied and attended a few events in the second half of 1991, including the 90th anniversary of Brighton Corporation. Duncan and two friends also used 23 that winter to train for and take their PSV licences — they proved to be last, in 1992, to take (and pass) the PSV driving test at Lancing using a half-cab double-decker before the rules regarding training vehicle speed and type were changed.



09 The Friends of King Alfred Buses' principal running day on 6 May 2024 turned wet around lunchtime. A good load may be detected through 23's misted windows as it runs down the St Catherine's Park & Ride site's access road.



10 Amberley Museum hosts 23 on 24 September 2023 during its Autumn Bus Day. Brighton Corporation specified four-bay bodywork on its Weymann 'Aurora' and 'Orion' deliveries instead of the standard five-bay layout using shorter rectangular window units.

ATTENTION NEEDED

It was soon evident 23 needed more attention: 'I changed the engine in March 1992,' Duncan explains. 'I bought the engine from Southdown 411 DCD – by then re-registered AOR 160B – that had been withdrawn from service, through the good offices of Richard Alexander.

'We used a forklift truck to make the change, but also needed to swap 23's gearbox from the old engine onto its replacement. That engine is still in 23 now with the old engine kept for spares.'

Further work saw the Titan's rear springs overhauled and several lower external panels replaced, with the old used as templates when cut to size by Kevin Gannon at Stagecoach's Worthing body shop. The interior was also repainted.

'No 23 had a nine-month period without a MoT,' reflects Duncan. 'I stripped many layers of paint from the exterior such that there was almost none left. I then applied primer, undercoat, and topcoats; it took time to put together as I was then working full-time and had one day a week to work on 23.'

The completed 23 made its debut at Amberley Museum's 1994 Bus Running Day, although it was considered sufficiently complete paint-wise to attend the previous year's event with sister 30. 1994 also saw 23's movement from Christ's Hospital to its current mid-Hampshire home following loss of accommodation.

ROLLING MAINTENANCE

No 23 required structural attention in 1998 to replace corroded nearside between-decks stress sections with new material, although it proved possible to re-use the existing external panels.

'I took the opportunity to look at the rest of 23,' says Duncan. 'There were areas when panels had not been taken off before, so I removed nearside and rear external panelling to check the framework beneath.

'It is essential to make sure the steel bodywork framing is well painted before attaching the aluminium panels otherwise electrolytic reaction will occur,' he adds. 'There is no timber between the different metals – it really is all-metal bodywork.'

Other work has seen the fitting of tubeless tyres — and consequent replacement wheels — to remove the previous use of split rims and inner tubes. A tyre-fitter's work is much easier as a result.

The Covid lockdown provided Duncan with the opportunity to refresh 23's interior. A full repaint was carried out before a contractor was employed to lay a new upper-deck floor covering. All seats were reupholstered using new moquette acquired from the Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum. It is the same colour as that originally specified by Brighton Corporation although one would need to be a purist to note the different pattern.

The window rubbers were replaced for the third time during Duncan's ownership; on this occasion silicon extrusions were used to ensure longevity when compared to the previous rubber. The final touch was an external repaint in Brighton's red and cream livery, Duncan was careful to paint around the fleet names and legal lettering previous signwritten by Gerald Whittaker.

Currently underway is the refurbishment of the Leyland O.600 engine's cylinder head and the Titan's front brakes.

PRESERVATION STALWART

Duncan's ownership of 23 has seen the bus regularly attend rallies and running days within easy reach of its homes in West Sussex and mid-Hampshire, although it won't be seen if the roads are covered in winter salt or when the weather proves too inclement. No 23 is a regular attendee at the Alton and Worthing bus running days and was also present at each Southsea Spectacular until the event's . The bus did. however, attend the Southdown 100 event on Southsea Common.

More recently, 23 has attended the Tinkers Park events near Uckfield and was a guest vehicle at the Oxford Bus Museum at a 2024 running day. Returns to Brighton have also been made for Corporation and Brighton, Hove & District commemorative events and as a surprise package at the recent retirement of a Brighton & Hove bus driver.

The Titan's longest preservation run was in 1996 when it was taken to the Leyland Motors centenary event at the Farrington works — seven hours there and six back. Such journeys are usually avoided as 23 was built to suit bus operations within Brighton's hilly territory; a low ratio rear axle and four-speed gearbox limit the maximum speed to a stately 38 to 40mph.

'No 23 has always been roadworthy,' Duncan concludes. 'It has never been derelict and always has an MoT when used on the public highway, even now when exempt.

'It is a robust vehicle that is part of the family, but age is catching up with me. What to do with 23 is something I must consider in time given its historical importance.'

Our thanks to Duncan Richardson for his kind assistance and hospitality.

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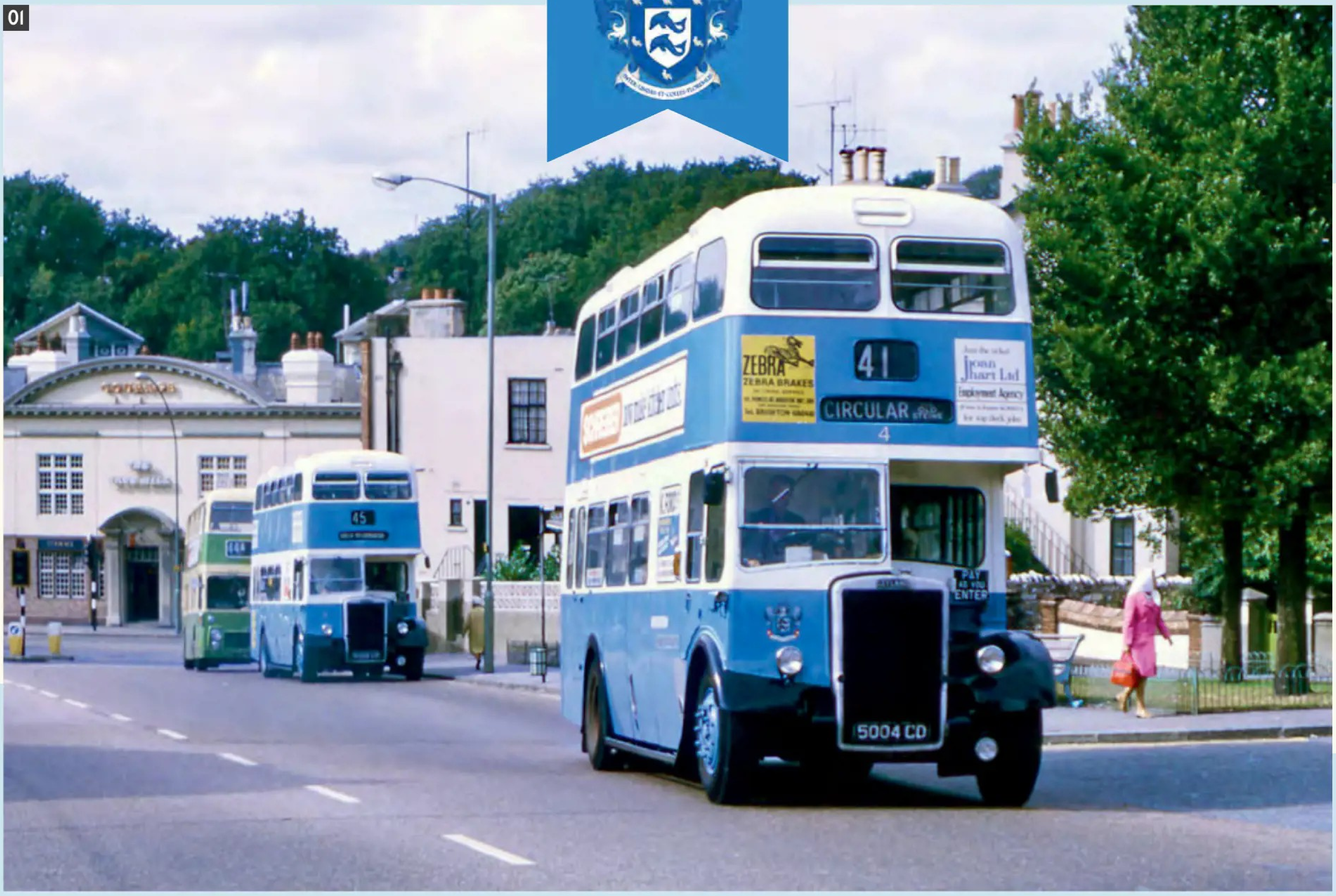
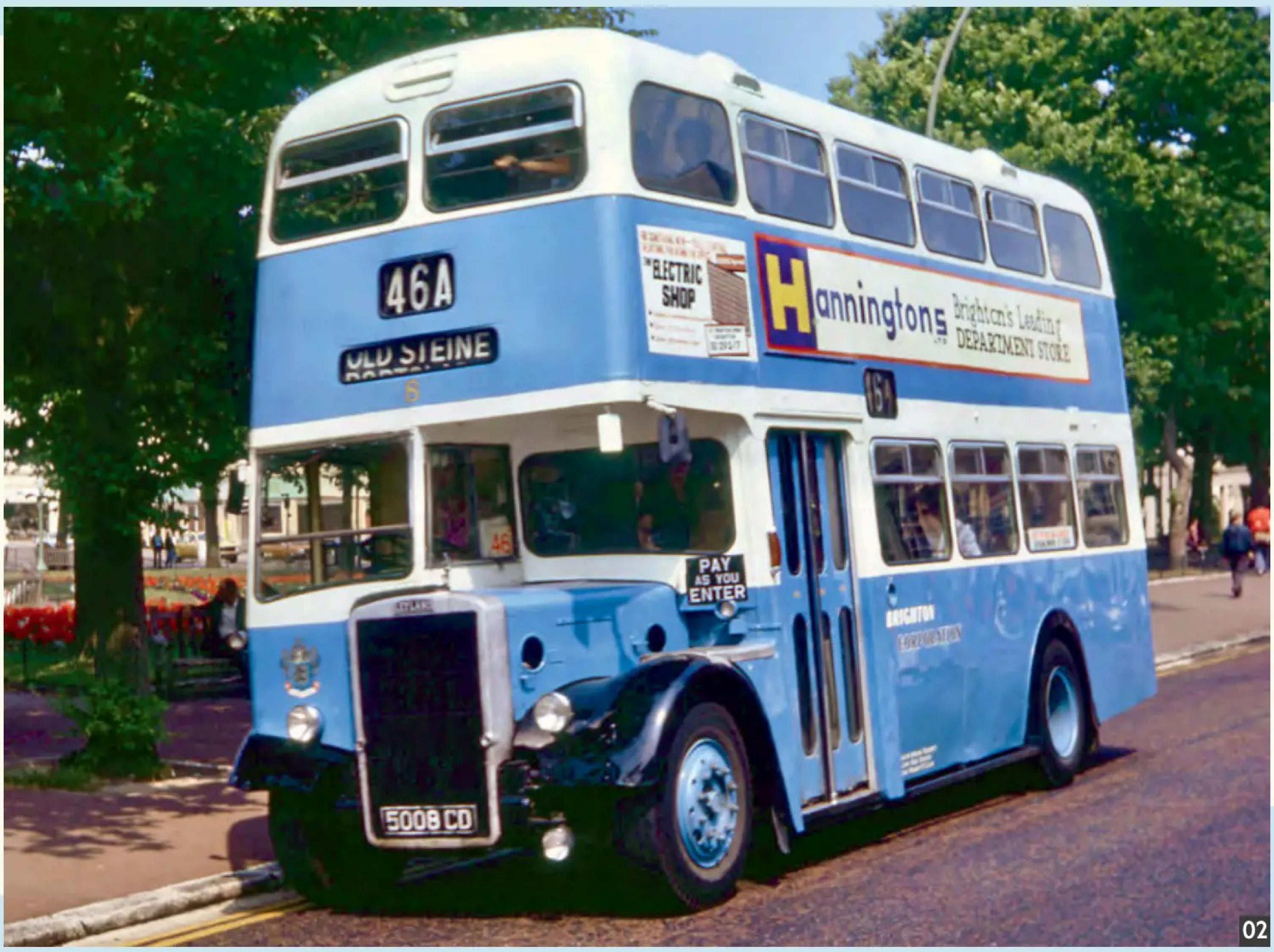


Brighton Blue

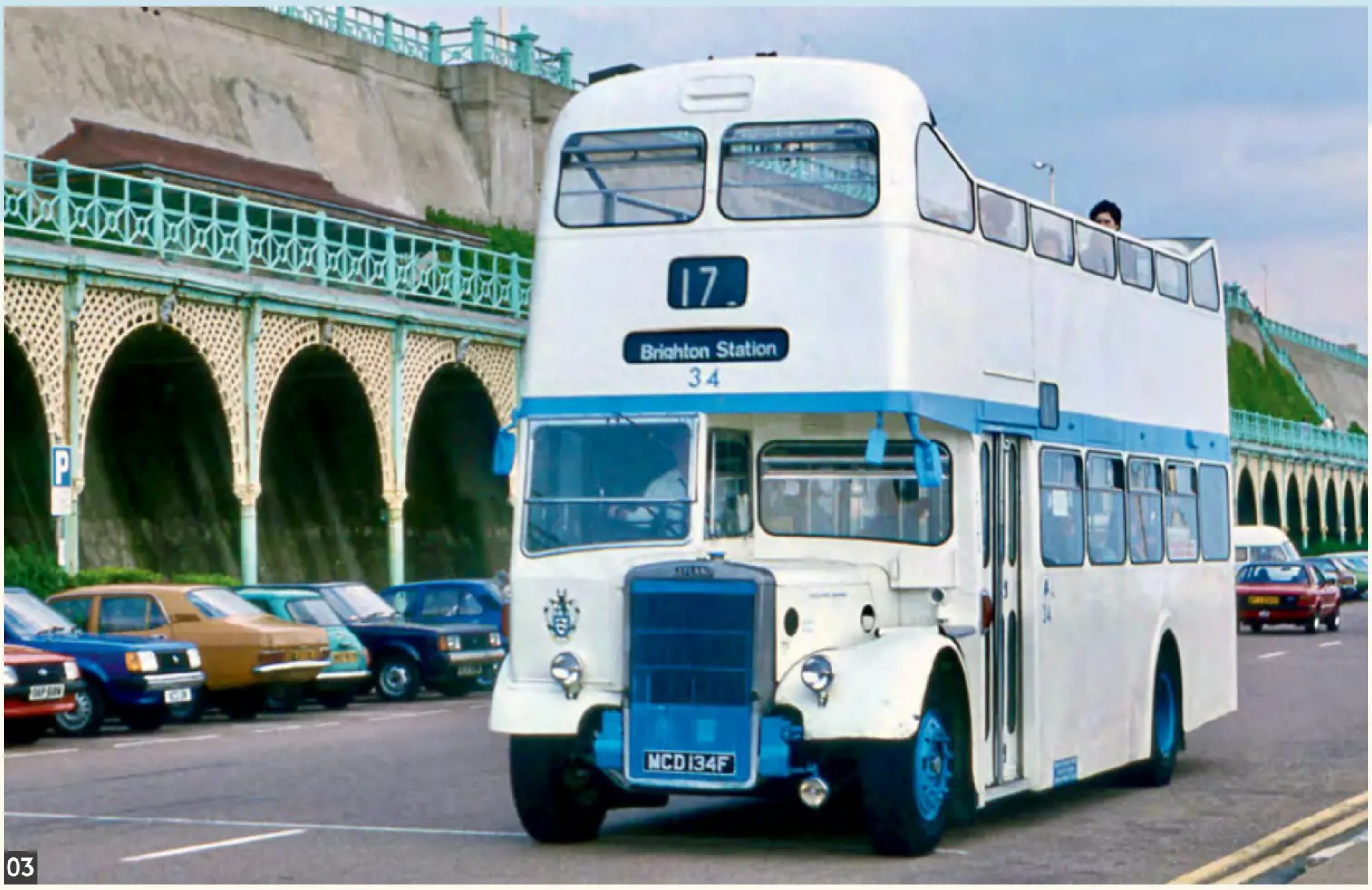
We take a journey through the years when Brighton's buses turned blue.



02

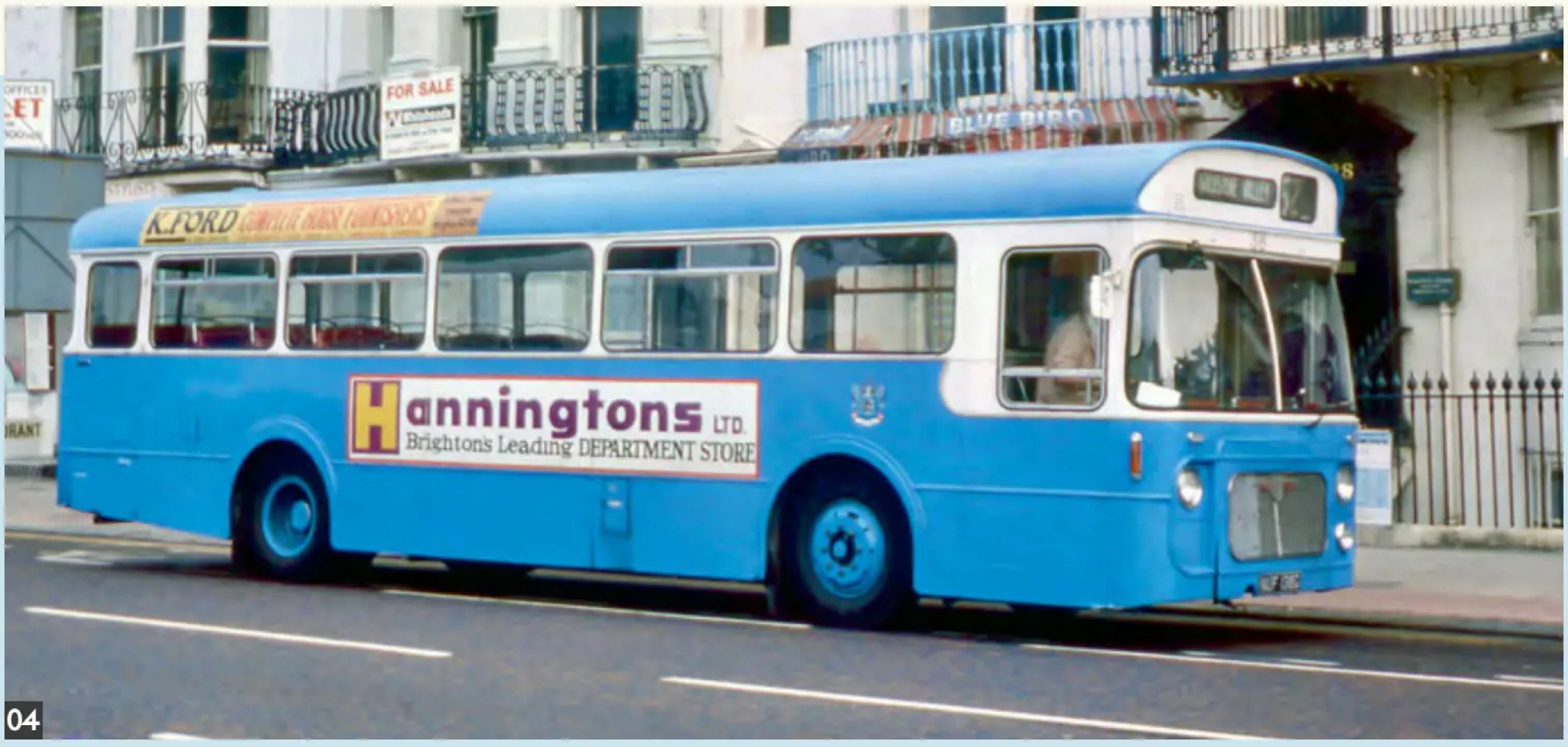
01 In 1961, Brighton purchased 16 Leyland PD2/37s with forward-entrance Weymann-bodies. These followed 20 conventional rear-entrance PD2/37s which had arrived in 1959. Converted for OPO, all were to see up to 17 years' service. Seen here in March 1974, No 4 (5004 CD) was one of four buses from this batch to be converted to open-top following withdrawal, but prior to seeing further service with Sundeckers/ Suntrekkers, specialists in overland tours to Europe, Asia etc using adapted double deckers, usually half-cabs. **PRESBUS ARCHIVE**

02 Also passing to Sundekkers in 1978, No 8 (5008 CD) is seen here in September 1975 passing through Old Steine. **PRESBUS ARCHIVE**



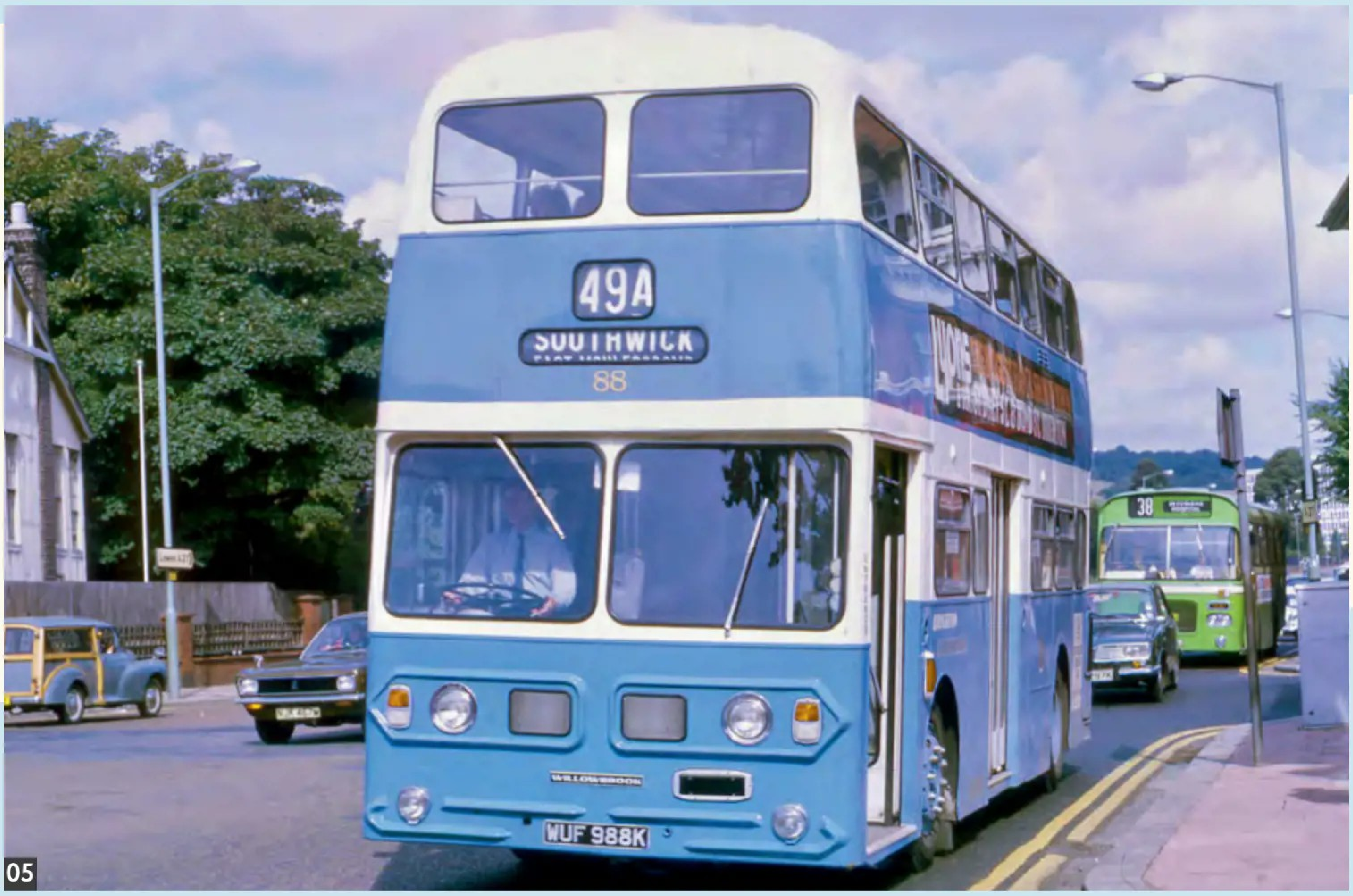
03

03 In 1968, Brighton purchased five Cammell-Laird-bodied Leyland PD3/4s In 1979, these were converted at Southend to open-top, returning home to work on Brighton's Seafront for a few more years. Following withdrawal, No 34 (MCD 134F) went on to see service on the Isle-of-Wight with Wightline, prior to London sightseeing duties with London Pride.
PRESBUS ARCHIVE



04

04 Brighton inevitably joined the trend towards high-capacity single-deckers purchasing seven Leyland Panther Cubs, the first three of which received rare Strachan Pacemax-bodies. Seen here is No 38 (NUF 138G), new in 1968 one of only seven examples of this chassis/body combination to be built. The others comprised three for Thomas Bros of Port Talbot plus a Leyland demonstrator, Brighton's remaining Panther Cubs receiving Marshall bodied These were the last of 94 Panther Cubs to enter service in the UK and failed to impress. They were sold at seven years old, presumably when their initial Certificates of Fitness expired. It was to be 1983 before Brighton bought any more single-deckers. No 38 found a new home as a staff bus with Lockwood's Foods at Long Sutton in Lincolnshire.
PRESBUS ARCHIVE



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05 So it was back to double-deckers . . . Between 1971 and 1973 20 Willowbrook-bodied Leyland Atlanteans arrived. The first five of which, including No 88 (WUF 988K) were PDR1/1s, the remainder being AN68As No 88 is seen in service in March 1974.
PRESBUS ARCHIVE

06 The detailed Willowbrook dash panels were replaced with simplified versions as time passed. Seen here in April 1980 is No 43 (CUF 143L) which was sold out of service to Fowlers of Holbeach Drove and was last used at Truckfest 1996 by Granthams to demonstrate the recovery of an overturned double-decker.
PRESBUS ARCHIVE

07 Brighton continued to purchase Leyland Atlanteans including a batch of 15 with East Lancs bodywork in 1978. Six were converted in 1997 by Guide Friday, No 3 (TYJ 3S) being re-registered HNP 154S. It was initially allocated to the Brighton Tour, migrating later to the Hastings Tour wearing a red and cream livery.
PRESBUS ARCHIVE/ GRAHAM WISE

08 In 1981 Brighton switched allegiance to the Dennis Dominator, but only six were taken into stock. Seen here on a wet day in Old Steine is No 19 (C719 NCD) with Eat Lancs bodywork, new in 1985. All four 1985 deliveries were sold to Bullocks of Cheadle in 1996.
PRESBUS ARCHIVE

09 As previously mentioned 1983 saw the arrival of seven Leyland National 2s, the last of which No 31 (XFG 31Y), seen here when new, was fitted with dual-purpose seating.
PRESBUS ARCHIVE

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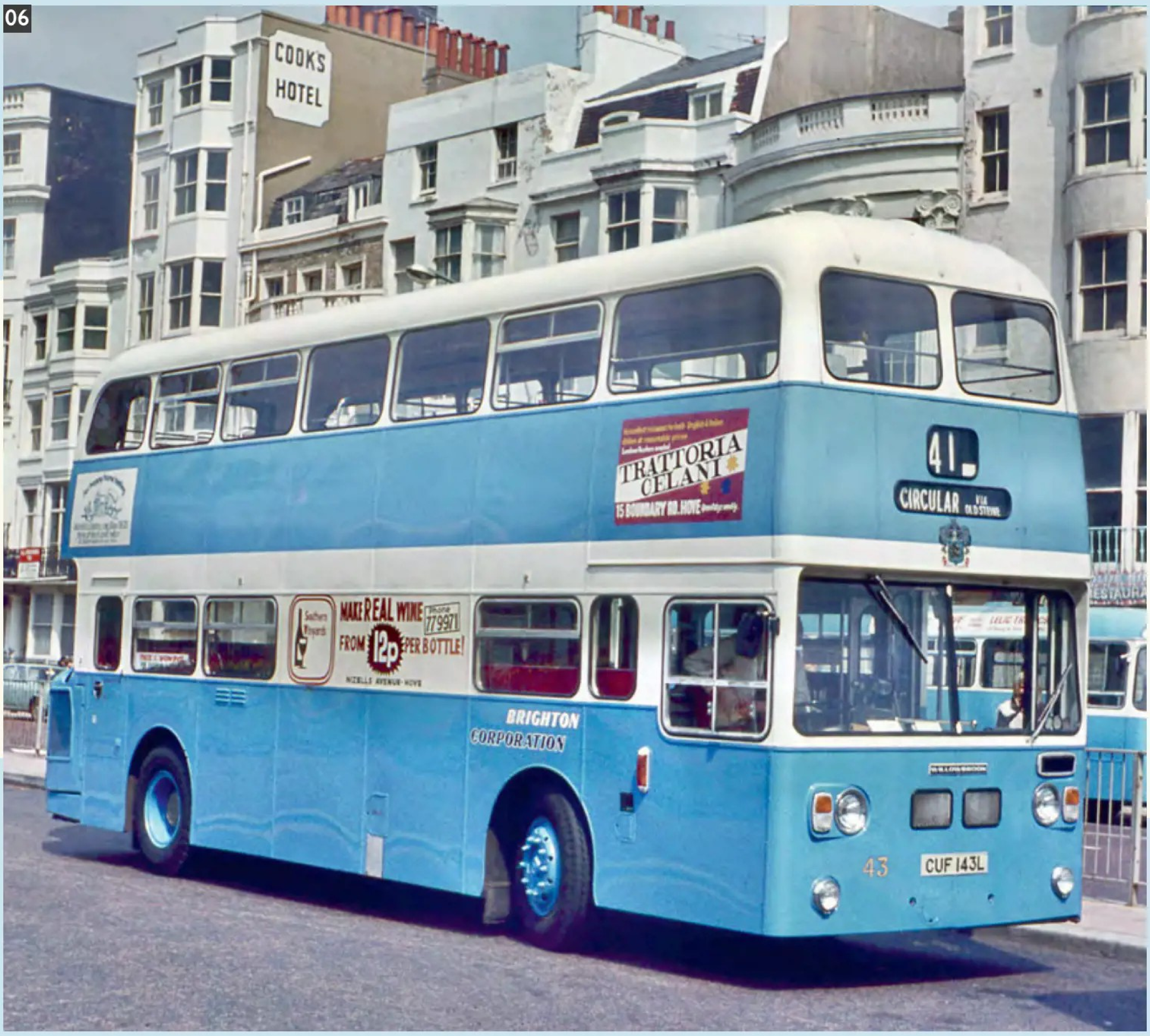
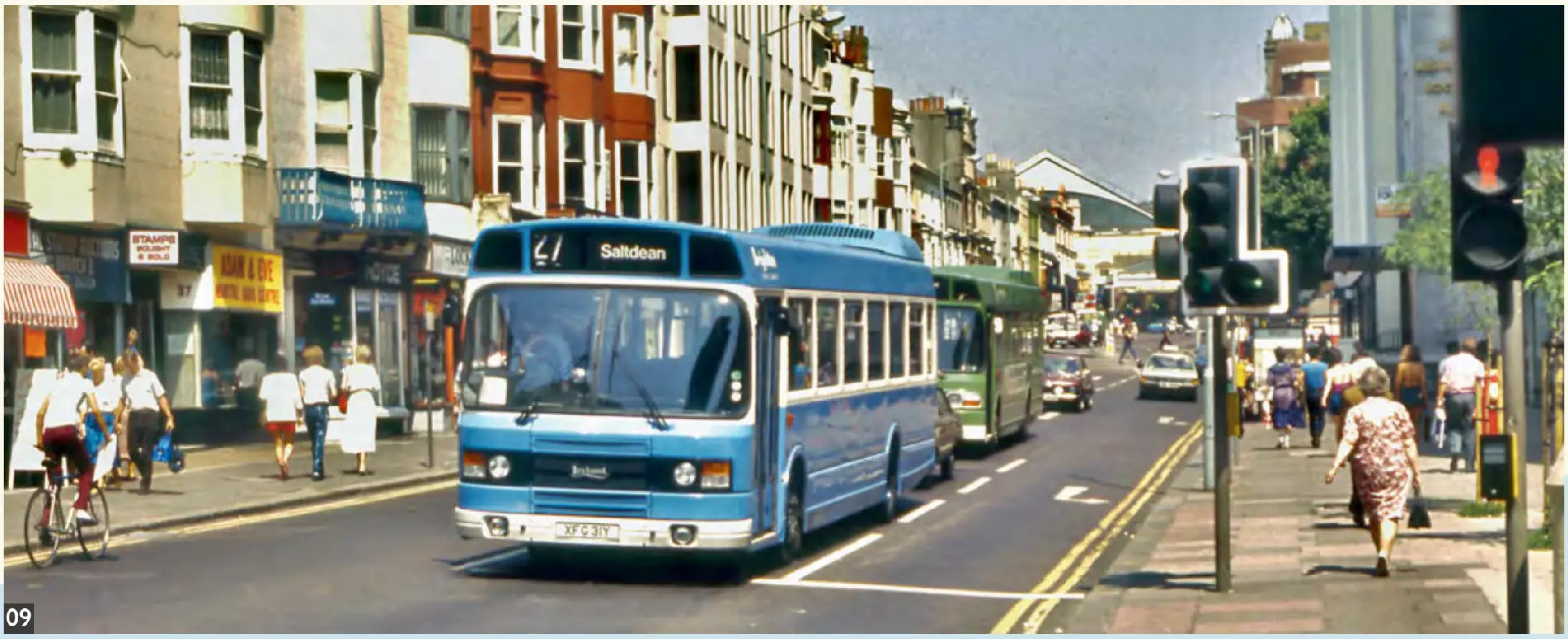
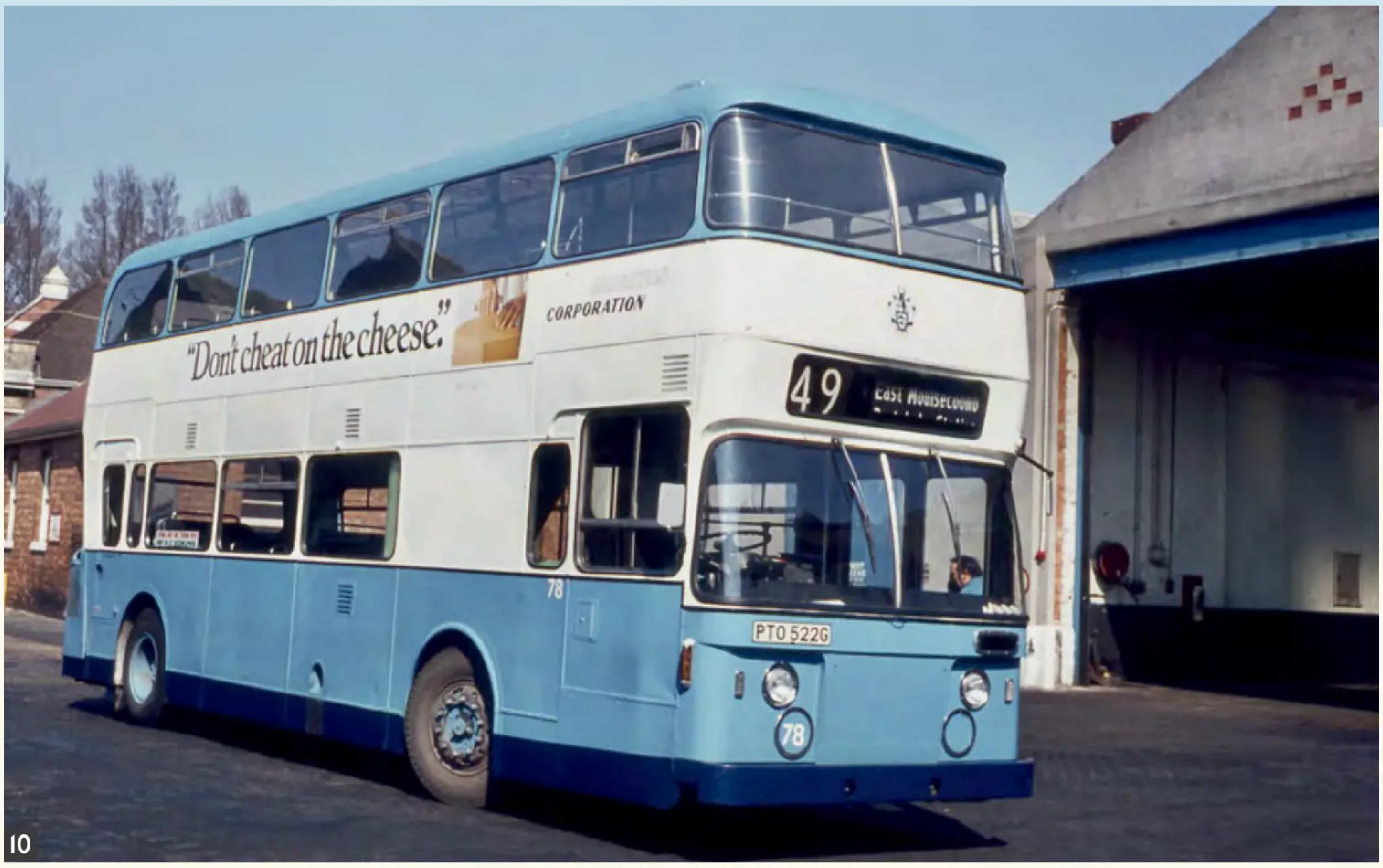

COOKS HOTEL
41
CIRCULAR
TRATTORIA CELANI
MAKE REAL WINE FROM 12p PER BOTTLE
BRIGHTON CORPORATION
43
CUF 143L

07

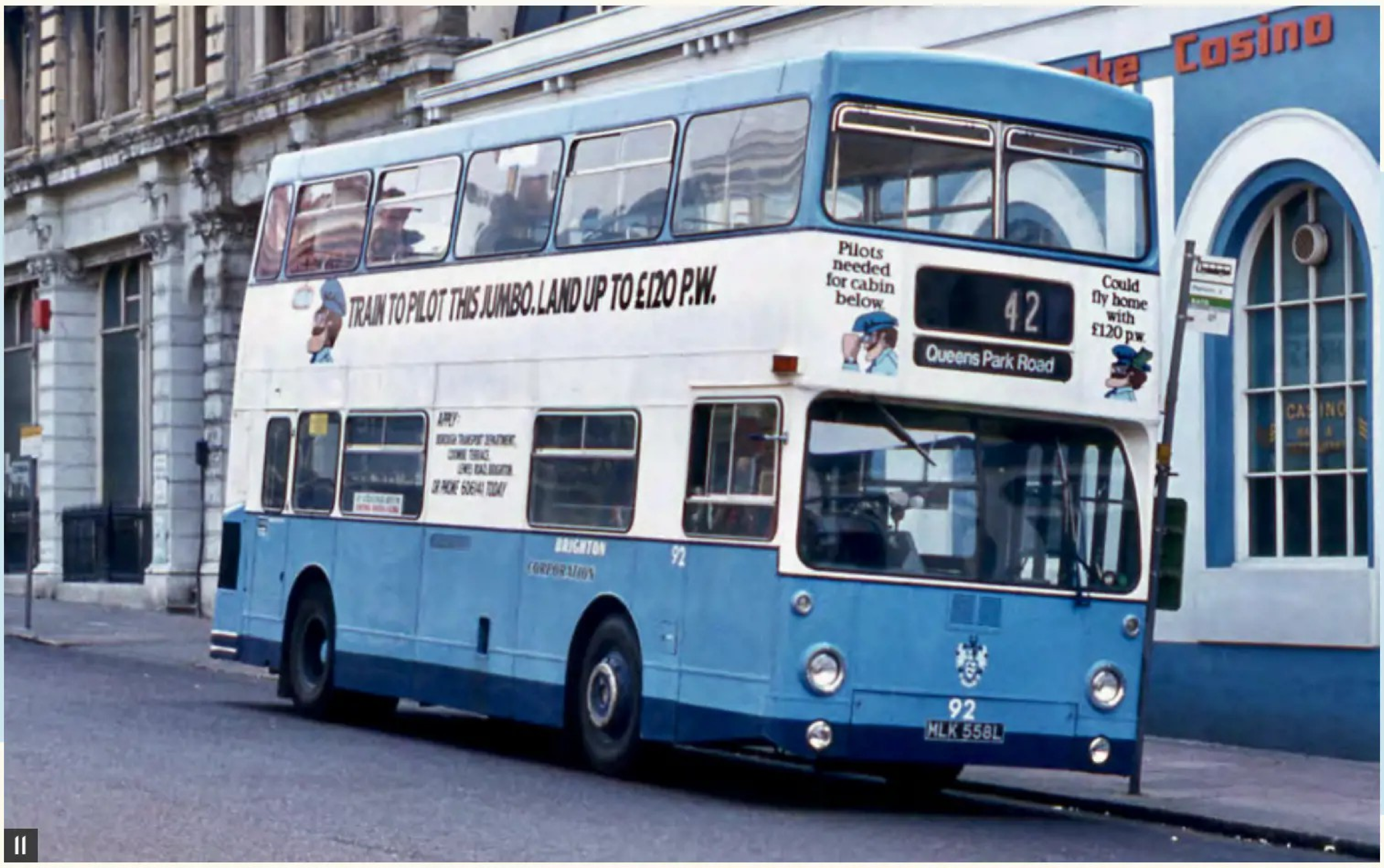
08


Saltdean
STAMPS BOUGHT & SOLD
XFG 31Y

09

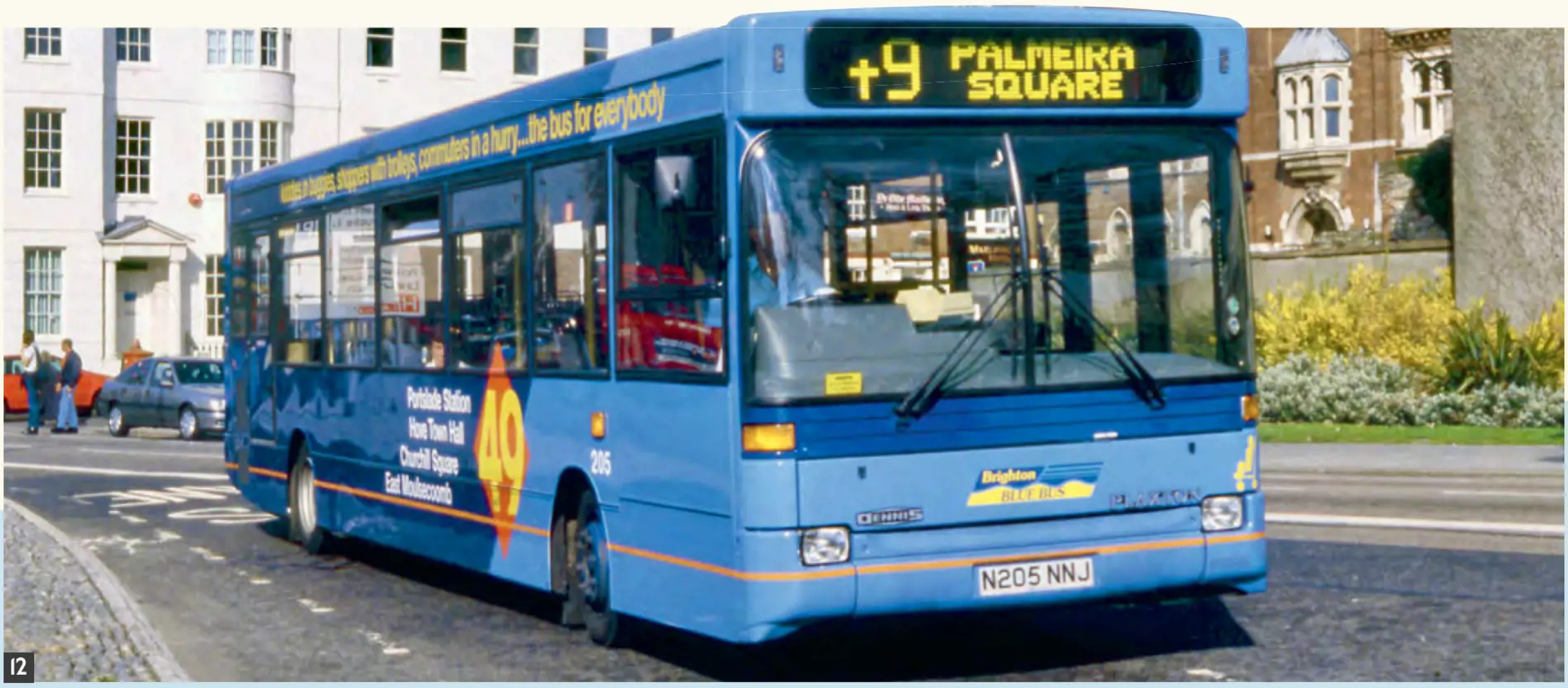

"Don't cheat on the cheese."
CORPORATION
49 East Moulsecoomb
78
PTO 522G
78

10 To cover for the absence of the four PD3/4s despatched to Southend for open-top conversion, Brighton purchased a similar number of Atlanteans from Nottingham fitted with 'Nottingham-style' Northern Counties bodywork. Seen here is No 78 (PT0 522G) new as Nottingham 522. **PRESBUS ARCHIVE**


Casino
TRAIN TO PILOT THIS JUMBO. LAND UP TO £120 P.W.
Pilots needed for cabin below
42
Queens Park Road
Could fly home with £120 p.w.
BRIGHTON CORPORATION
92
92
MLK 558L

11 No 92 (MLK 558L), a Park Royal-bodied Daimler Fleetline was new to London Transport as its DMS558, one of many of its type sold prematurely. This example was one of two to pass to Brighton Borough Transport in 1980. Withdrawn in 1984 it was subsequently used as a builders' mess-room before being bought by Lonsdale Coaches for spares in 1986. **PRESBUS ARCHIVE**

12 Before we leave Brighton, a quick look at the final phase of the blue bus in the city. As an 'arm's-length' operator, Brighton standardised on the Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLF prior to its sale to the Go-Ahead Group and its inclusion within its Brighton & Hove subsidiary. Pictured here in April 1997 is recently delivered No 205 (N205 NNJ), which was later transferred to Wilts & Dorset then Damory and is now preserved. **PRESBUS ARCHIVE/ PHILIP LAMB**


49 PALMEIRA SQUARE
...the bus for everybody
Portslade Station
Hove Town Hall
Churchill Square
East Moulsecoomb
49
205
DENNIS
Brighton BLUE BUS
N205 NNJ

Canvey 90

JOHN G. LIDSTONE marks Canvey Depot's 'Birthday Bash'.

The Canvey Island Transport Museum at Point Road celebrated not one, but three anniversaries on 13 October last.

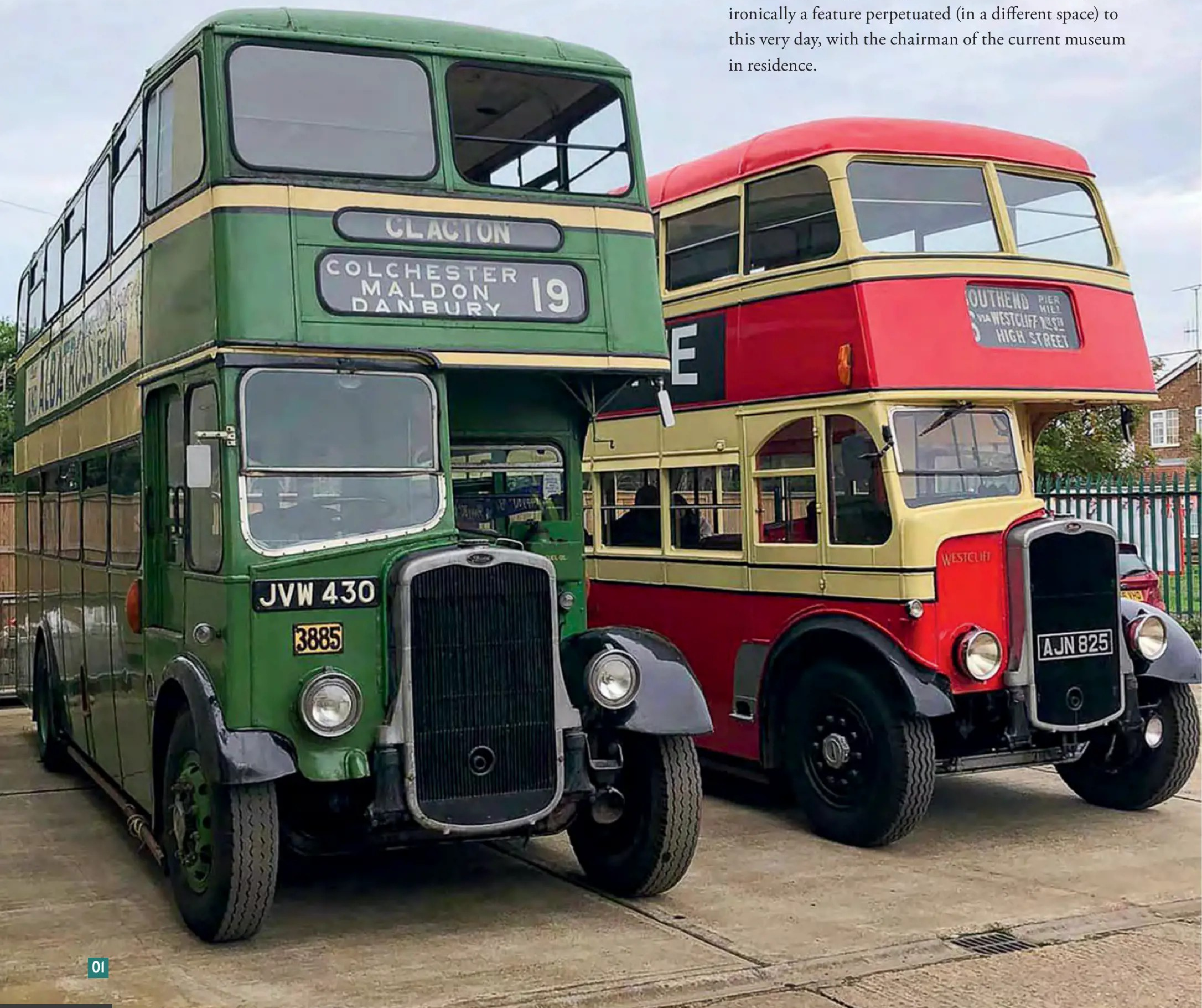
Canvey & District Motor Transport cemented its presence on the island by constructing an impressive new depot with castellated frontage 90 years ago, in 1934, whilst 2024 marks the 45th year of that building being established as a transport museum and, last but not least, Eastern National's 1944 Bristol K5G 3885 (JVW 430), a long-term resident of the museum, celebrates its 80th birthday this year.

Canvey depot passed to Benfleet & District control after a year, then to Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services control in 1951, after which the all-conquering Eastern National acquired it in 1954, a year after the disastrous floods which struck Canvey Island in 1953. The familiar WMS red and cream was soon swept away, too, by 1956.

Eastern National operated the depot until April 1978, by which time the final allocation had shrunk to just 11 buses (six Bristol Lodekka FLF6LXs and five Leyland Nationals).

The final bus to work into the depot was Leyland National CY1725 (NEV 682M), which, appropriately, had been the last new bus to be allocated here.

Canvey depot was built to afford around 20 vehicles covered accommodation, with facilities including four inspection pits, a paintshop, stores, offices and, unusually perhaps, a large flat for the depot manager — ironically a feature perpetuated (in a different space) to this very day, with the chairman of the current museum in residence.



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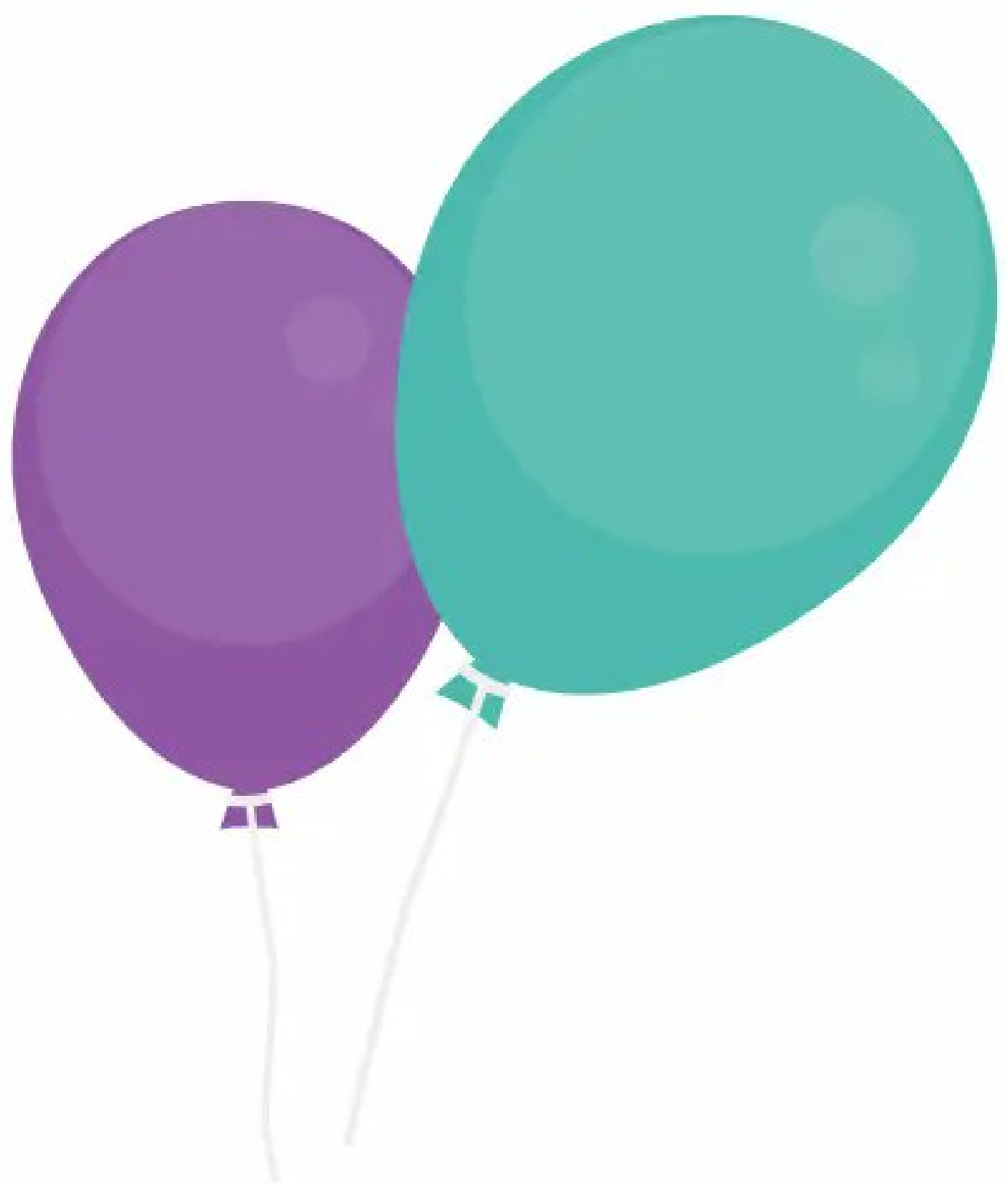
01 Contrast in pre-PV2 radiators. 80-year old 'postwar' prototype 1944 Bristol K5G 3885 (JVW 430), contrasts with 'prewar' 1939 K5G AJN 825. **IAN MAHONEY**

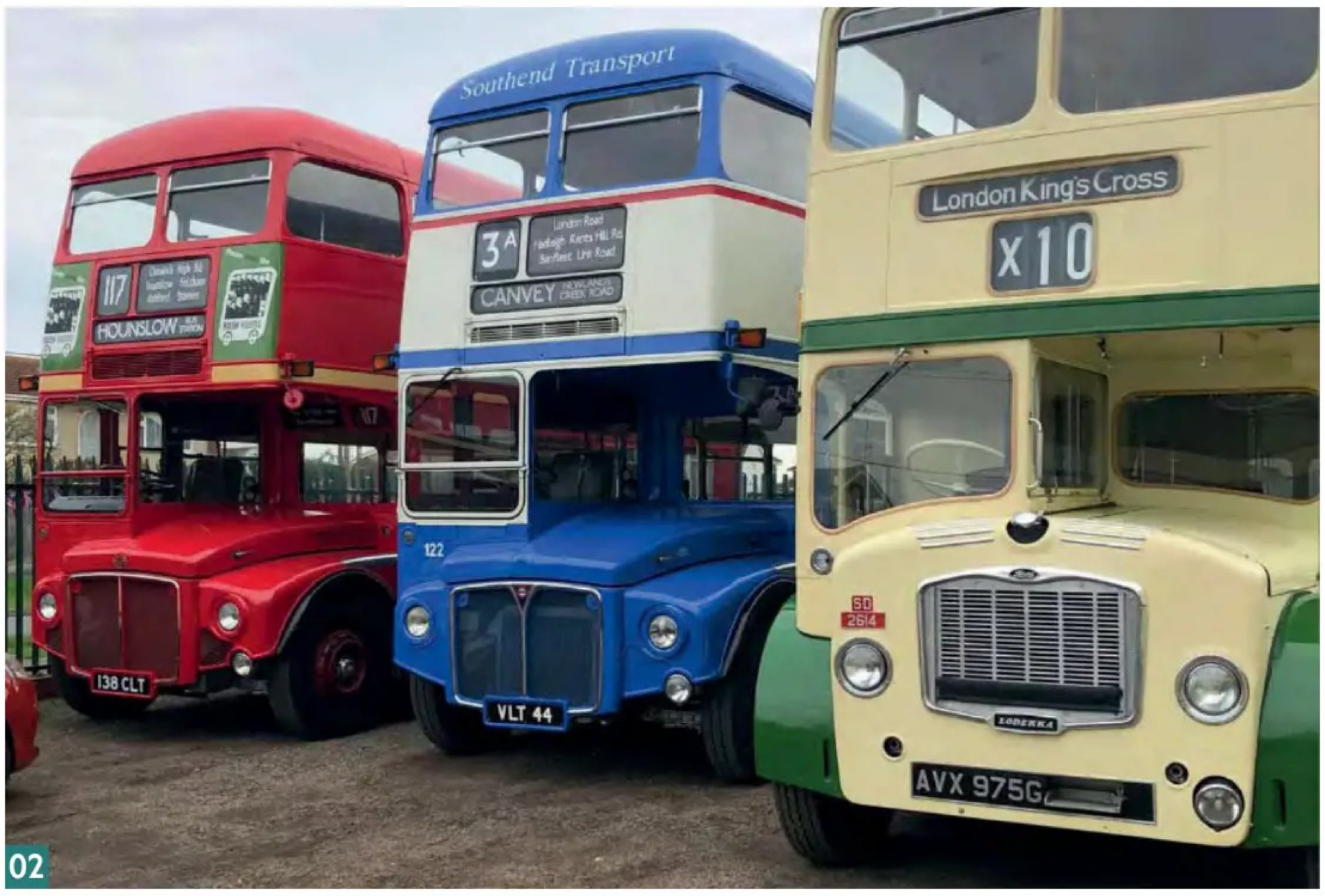
Thanks to much goodwill by Eastern National at the time of offering the depot for sale, together with the foresight of museum pioneers such as the late Joe Long, Terry Coughlin and Peter Hughes, a good collection of vehicles from Essex fleets was amassed, just in time, such that by the early 1980s, 34 buses and coaches were in residence.

Early residents of the museum included the penultimate EN ex-Moore's of Kelvedon Guy Arab IV/ Massey KN2017 (373 WPU), EN Bristol L5G BN309 (ONO 49), Bristol MW5G DP BN480 (217 MHK), first Lodekka HH2400 (XVX 19), Chambers of Bures bought-new Guy Arab IV/Roe KCF 711, Southend CT Daimler CWA6 244 (FOP 429), former Southend CT/ Police bus Daimler CWA6/Massey 263 (GLX 913), EN Bristol L6B coach 328 (PTW 110), Leyland Titan PD1A/ECW MPU 52, the EN stores lorry Bristol L6B 0238 (EBD 238), publicity bus Lodekka fully-fronted K5G 0846 (GBE 846), EN all-Dennis Mace CTW 210, Bristol LDL6G prototype BD 2510 (236 LNO), FLF6B(6G) coach SD 1640 (RWC 607), LL5G 1118 (ONO 997), KSW5G 2373 (VNO 868) and Southend CT Massey-bodied Leyland Titan PD3/6s lowbridge 315 (PHJ 954) and highbridge 335 (CJN 435C). Of these, due to collection thinning for a variety of reasons, nine remain in the museum today (WPU, ONO, PTW, MHK, XVX, FOP, MPU, LNO and PHJ). Without the museum, many of these would likely not been saved.

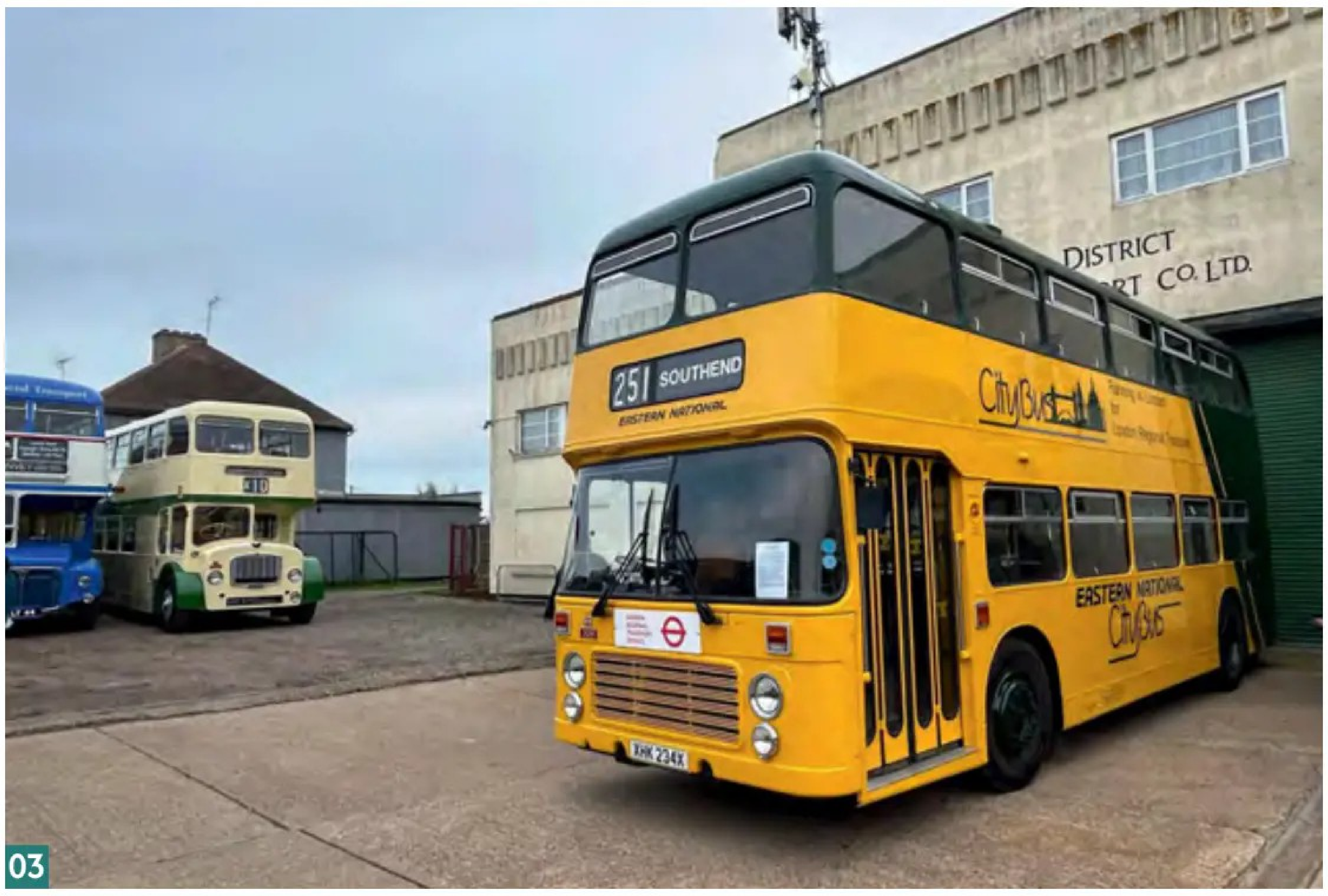
Bus preservation history within the building started earlier, right back in 1965, when the BTC Museum out-housed its saved and highly original former Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services 1939 Bristol K5G AJN 825 (from display at Clapham), which was handed back to Eastern National.

Painted in a representation of WMS red and cream livery, originally with as-new bare metal 'turned' bonnet side, this gem is now in the care of the AJN 825 Group, having left the museum back in 1988 and having very narrowly avoided loss to fire.

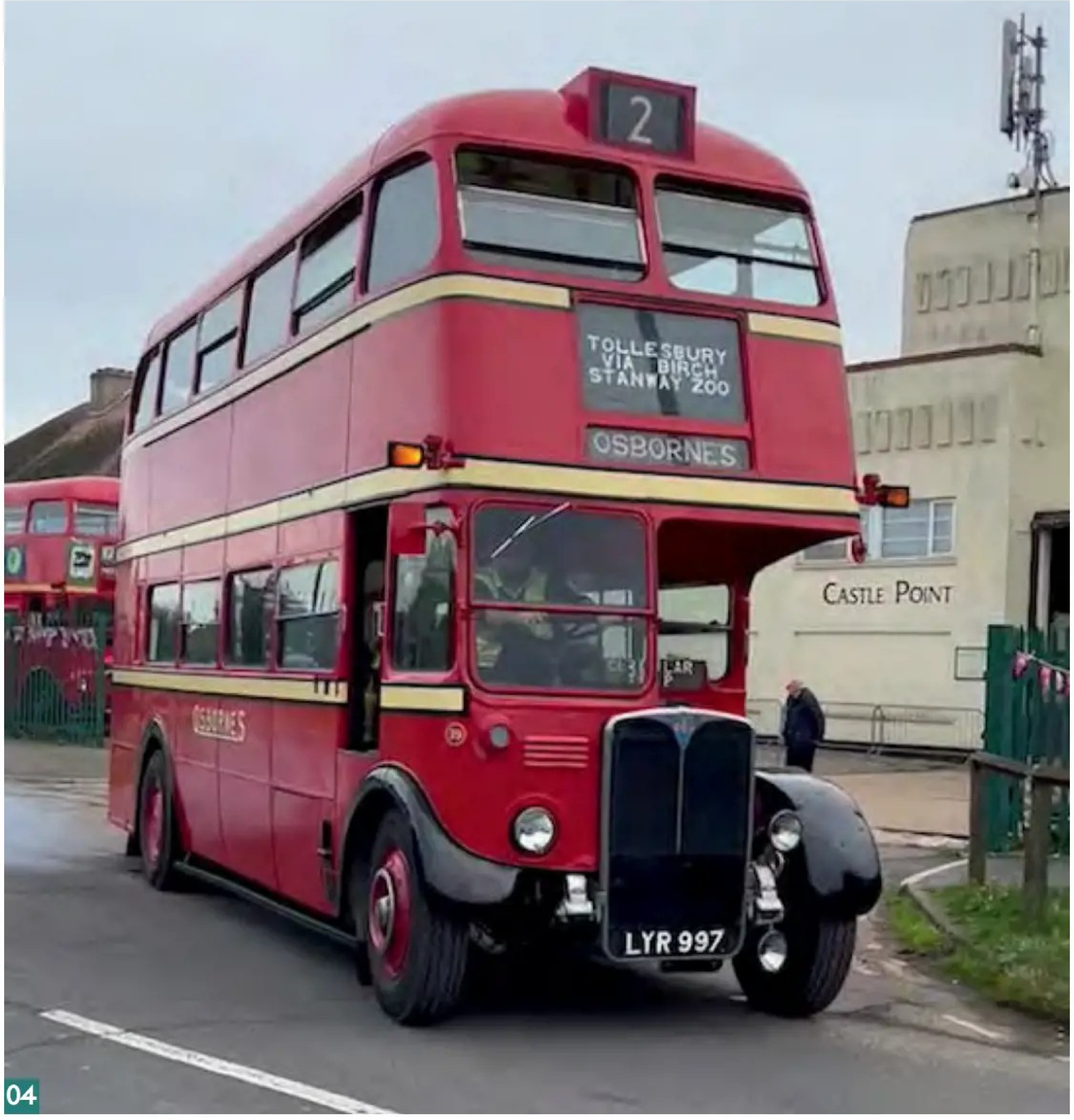




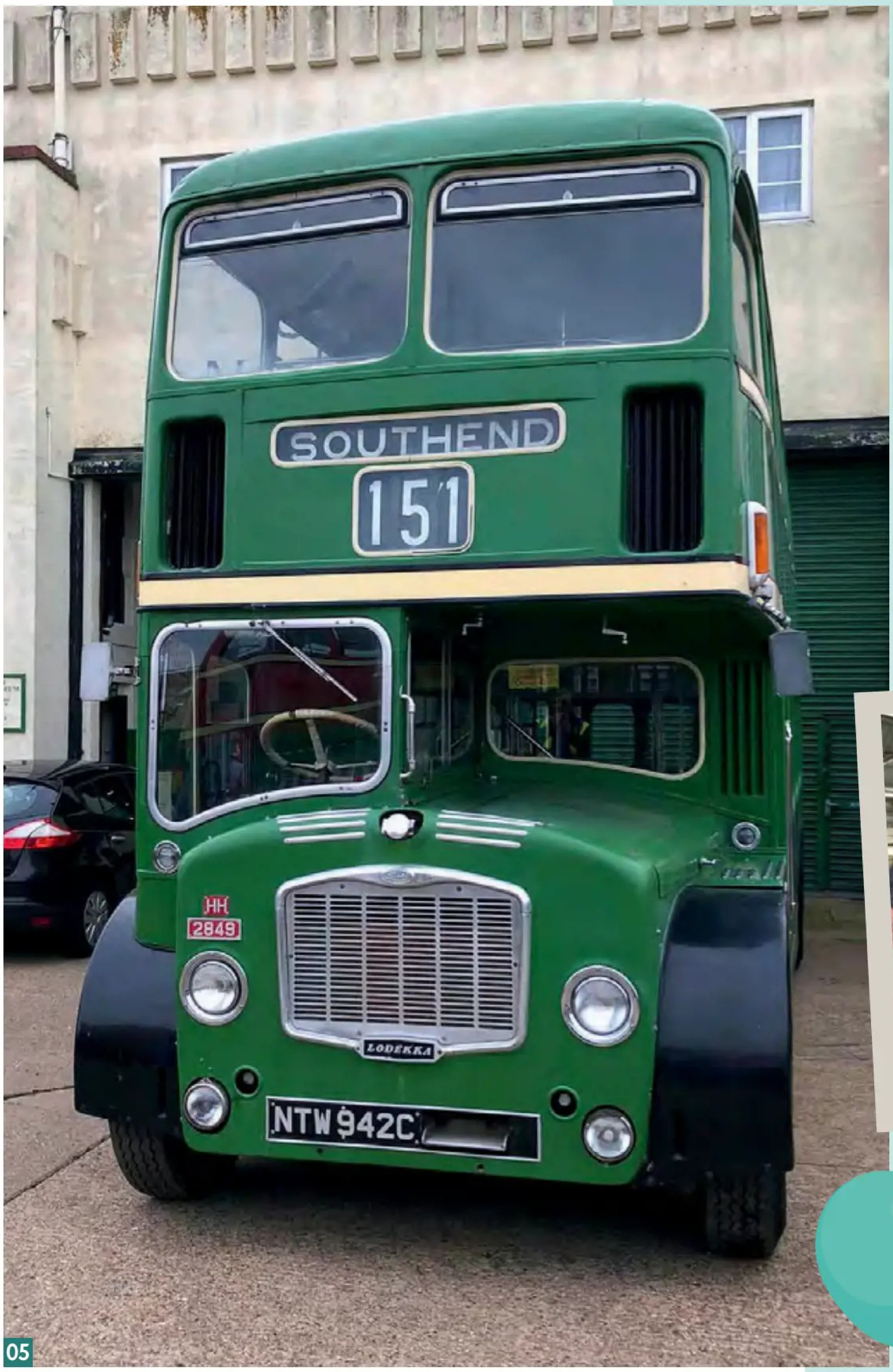
02 Paul Harrison's superb Bristol FLF6LX SD2614 (AVX 975G), the historic last Lodekka built, contrasts Routemasters RM1138 (138 CLT) and RM44 (VLT 44). **ALAN CHUTE**



03 Historic contrast: Eastern National's last Bristol Lodekka, FLF6LX SD2614 (AVX 975G) looks over to EN's last VRT (and its last Bristol of all), WW3129 (XHK 234X). Both were new to Southend depot. The depot frontage now carries its original C&DMT lettering. **PAUL HARRISON**



04 Good loads were carried on the Museum link to Labworth Park. Here, museum chairman Callum Taylor departs with Keith Patten's ex-Osborne's pleasantly 'musical' RT39 (LYR 997), often used on such link services around the island. **IAN MAHONEY**



05 The one-time Hadleigh Depot 'show bus' of the late 1970s ('competing' with Southend Depot's tragically later burnt-out KSW5G SD 2382 (WNO 483) — FLF6G , HH2849 (NTW 942C) is now in Tilling green and cream, whereas its glory days were in NBC hues.
ALAN CHUTE

After its passenger career was over, EN's Bristol KSW5G open-topper 2380 (WNO 478) had been very unusually reallocated to 'inland' Basildon depot as a driver-trainer. Immediately cherished by drivers, it was acquired by them as early as 1971 and thereby the Eastern National Preservation Group was born.

50 years ago, the ENPG ran the first of many Southend bus rallies at Southchurch Park, these raising valuable funds toward securing Canvey depot freehold as a permanent home for bus preservation in south Essex, the Castle Point Transport Museum Society being formed to achieve that aim.

The freehold was purchased in 1983 under the guidance of the late Lyn Watson (an old school friend of mine), the astute Treasurer of CPTMS, for the 'keen' price of £40K!

05 Castle Point MP Dame Rebecca Harris cuts the celebration cake under the watchful eyes of museum chairman Callum Taylor and treasurer Craig Mara, Canvey Mayor Peter May and, far right, 'Mr Canvey' Ray Howard MBE. **ALAN CHUTE**

06 The 90th birthday cake nicely depicting the building. **IAN MAHONEY**

07 Celebrations under way between ex-Southend CT Leyland Titan PD3/4/Massey 315 (PHJ 954), on which the writer learnt to drive from scratch and Eastern National Bristol KSW5G/ECW SD2380 (WNO 478), the founder vehicle of ENPG and the museum collection. **IAN MAHONEY**

08 Busy stalls with L-R: EN Bristol KSW5G SD2380 (WNO 478), LD5G HH2400 (XVX 19), L5G BN309 (ONO 49), Southend Transport Fleetline FE33ALR 905 (JTD 395P), EN Leyland PDIA 3991 (MPU 52) and the unrestored lower-deck of a London LCC trailer tram, once a caravan on the island. **ALAN CHUTE**

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BIRTHDAY BASH

Fast forward to October 2024 and Sunday 13 was chosen to hold the 'Birthday Bash', which saw Dave Tucker unlock the gates at the early hour of 05.50 in preparation for a very enjoyable day for all, not heading home until after 20.00 that night!

To make space for a dance floor and some sales stalls, some vehicles were moved outside, notably including the historic K5G JVW 430, not seen outside for many a year and awaiting a complete bodywork rebuild before it can run again (like PD1A MPU 52, which is to be Craig Mara's next big project with Ian Mahoney).

'Birthday' JVW took pride of place on the museum frontage, with visiting AJN 825, affording a very interesting contrast between styles of 1939 and 1944.

On display opposite the K5Gs was the museum's resident pair of AEC Routemasters – Stuart Miles' immaculate RM44 (VLT 44) in Southend Transport livery as its 122, together with Bob Miles' equally mint RM1138 (138 CLT) in as-new London Transport condition, beside which was Paul Harrison's star ex-Eastern National Bristol Lodekka FLF6LX/ECW coach SD2614 (AVX 975G).

Also visiting was Stephenson's of Essex newly-restored ex-Eastern National Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB WW3129 (XHK 234X), which we recently featured, being reunited with EN's last FLF 2614 was particularly pleasant to see.

The VRT operated a link service from the Museum to The Monico, near Labworth Park, where a collection of heritage cars was assembled, accompanied by smartly-preserved former Kenzies Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton Supreme LEW 16W.

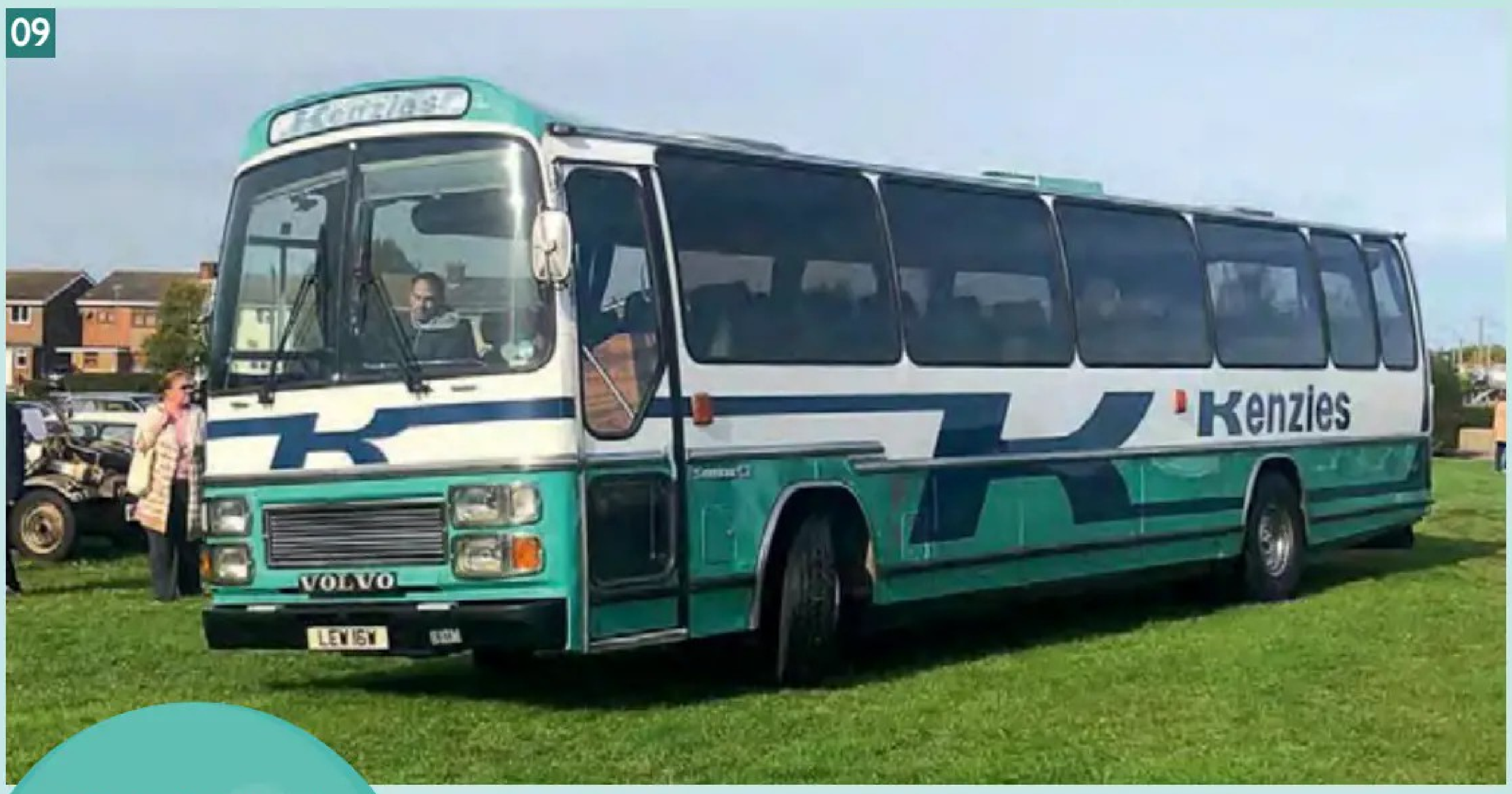
Also operating on the Canvey link was the museum's former Osborne's of Tollesbury AEC Regent III/Park Royal 39 (LYR 997), nicely preserved in Osborne's colours and with its unusual and neat platform doors, together with the former Eastern National late-1970s Hadleigh depot 'showbus' FLF6G/ECW HH2849 (NTW 942C).

This event differed from the museum open days of the past, those ended by the non-availability of Labworth Park for the bus and coach display and of the adjacent school grounds for vintage car displays.

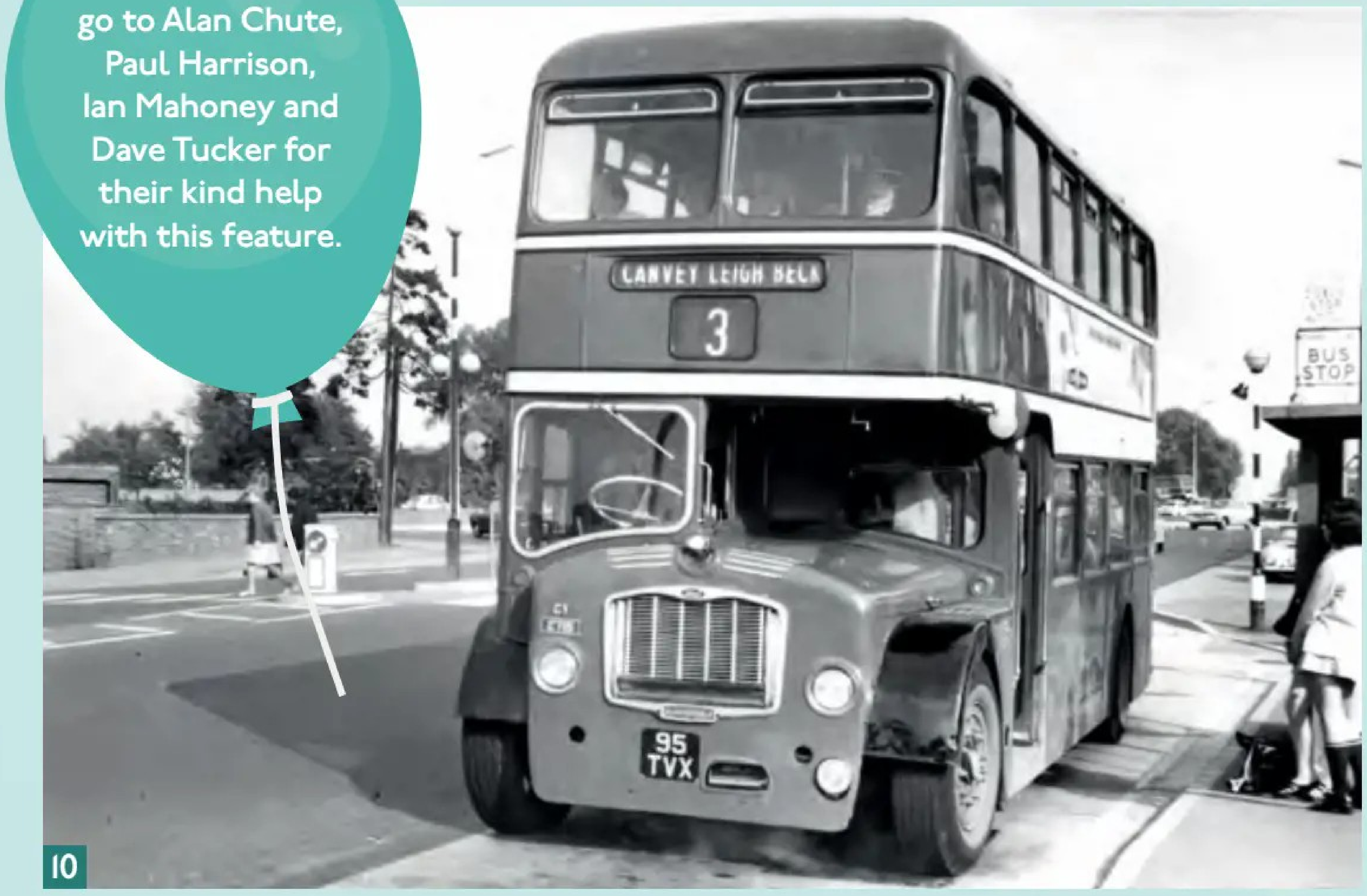
Castle Point MP Dame Rebecca Harris cut the celebration cake, whilst period dress was donned by many visitors (including Dave Tucker as a wartime 'spiv') and a prize for the best period costume was given.

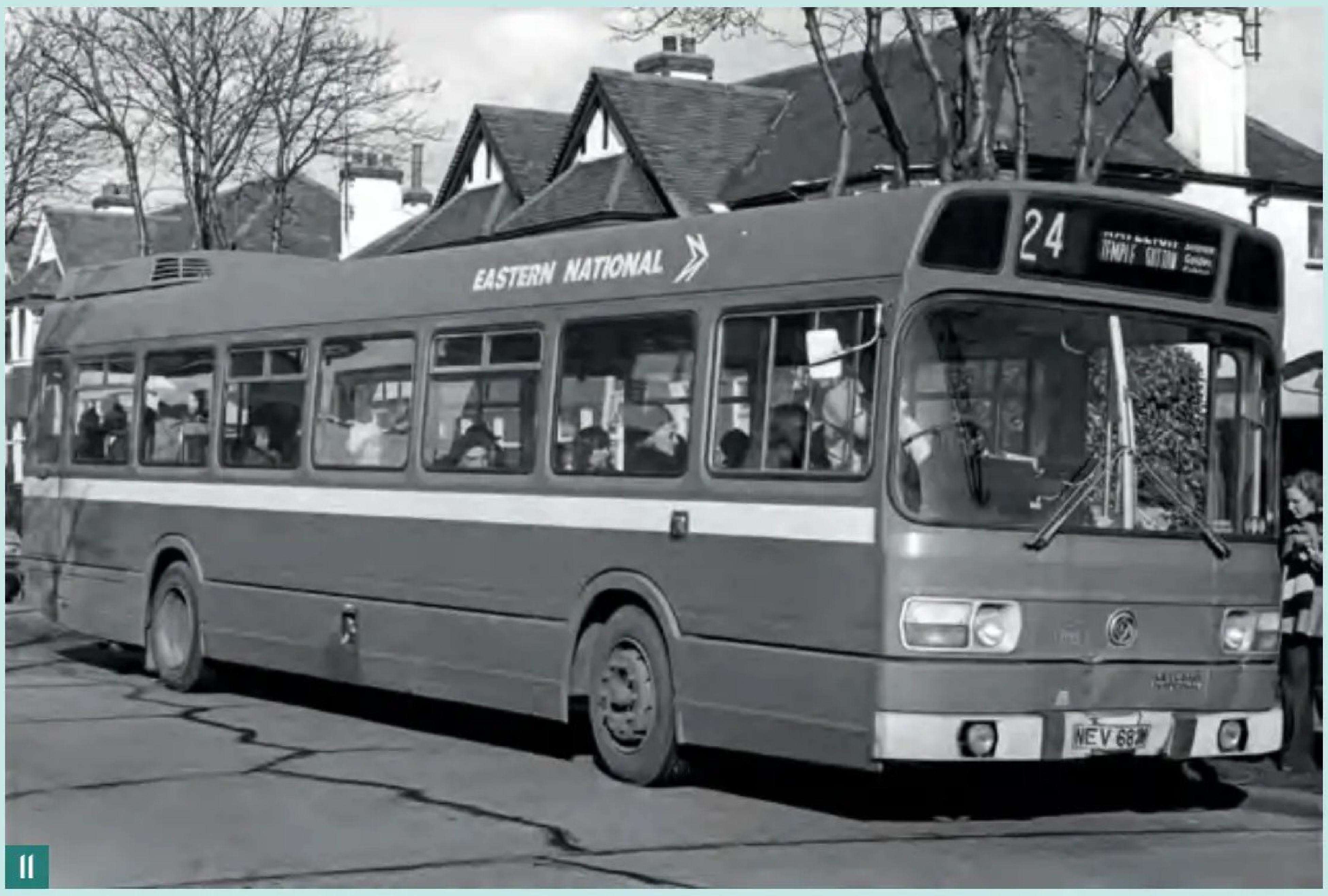
Musical enjoyment was provided by a ukulele band and singer Lorraine Cater, aided by the A2 Jive dancers — complete with Bob Miles as compere.

Around 800 visitors were welcomed into the museum during the day between 10.00 to 16.00 and a good amount was raised through stalls, refreshments and donations, this to be put toward the museum's part-completed and very ambitious internal rebuild, to include a mezzanine floor, café, improved access and facilities as a well as a lift to upper-floor levels, where a small community cinema is to be created.



Grateful thanks go to Alan Chute, Paul Harrison, Ian Mahoney and Dave Tucker for their kind help with this feature.

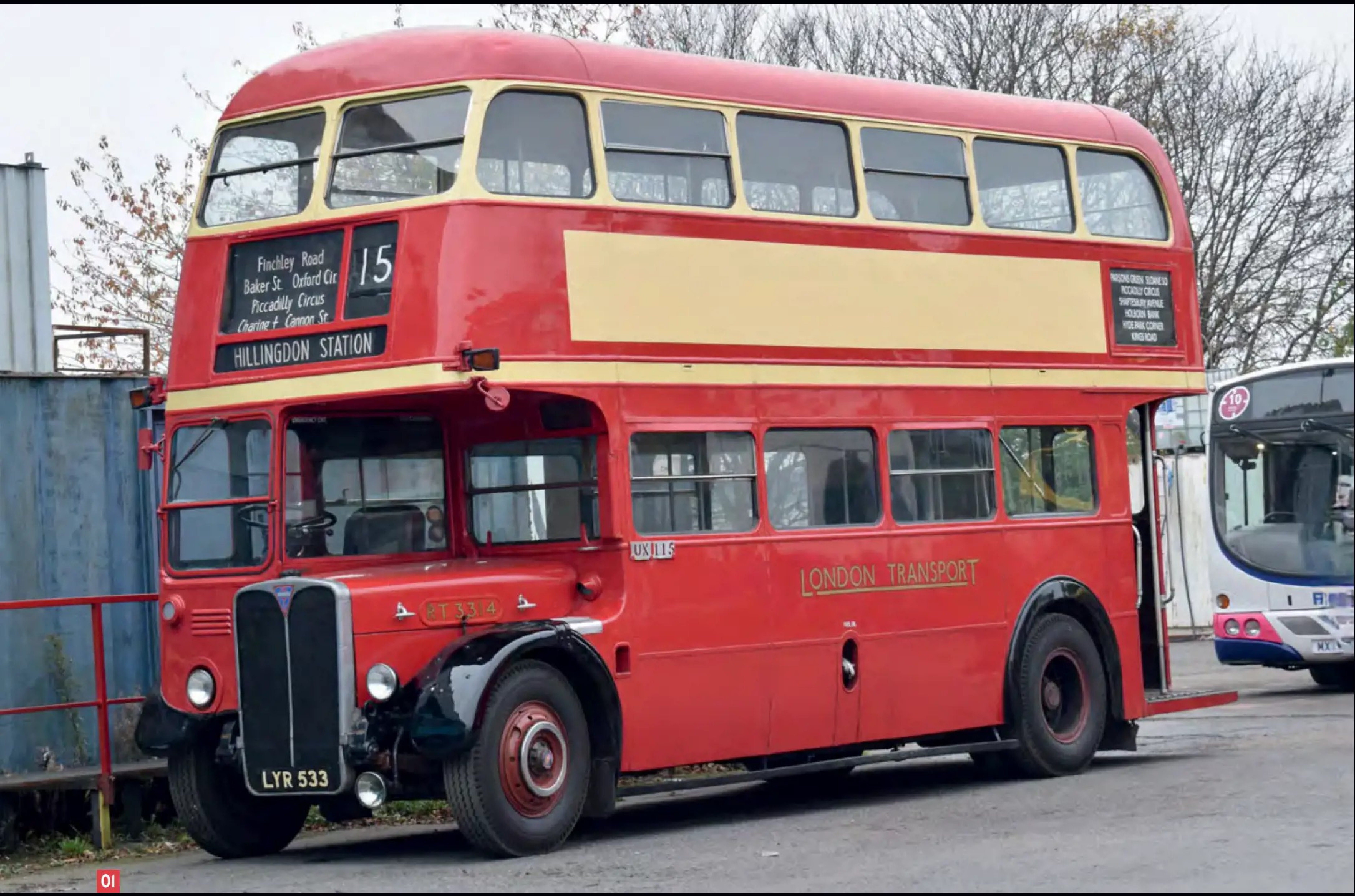




09 Visiting Jonnie Johnson's smartly restored Kenzies Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton Supreme LEW 16W at Labworth Park, where once Castle Point Museum bus rallies were held until a remodelling of the area around the park curtailed access. **ALAN CHUTE**

10 Canvey retrospect. A long-term Lodekka based at Canvey Depot, CY 2715 (95 TVX) unusually with post-1962 style radiator grille on its 1960 front cowling. Steam beneath shows it is boiling away opposite Hadleigh depot after the run from Shoeburyness, but it still has a 45min journey before 'rescue' at its home depot, just one stop before its terminus at Leigh Beck. **THE LATE TERRY COUGHLIN**

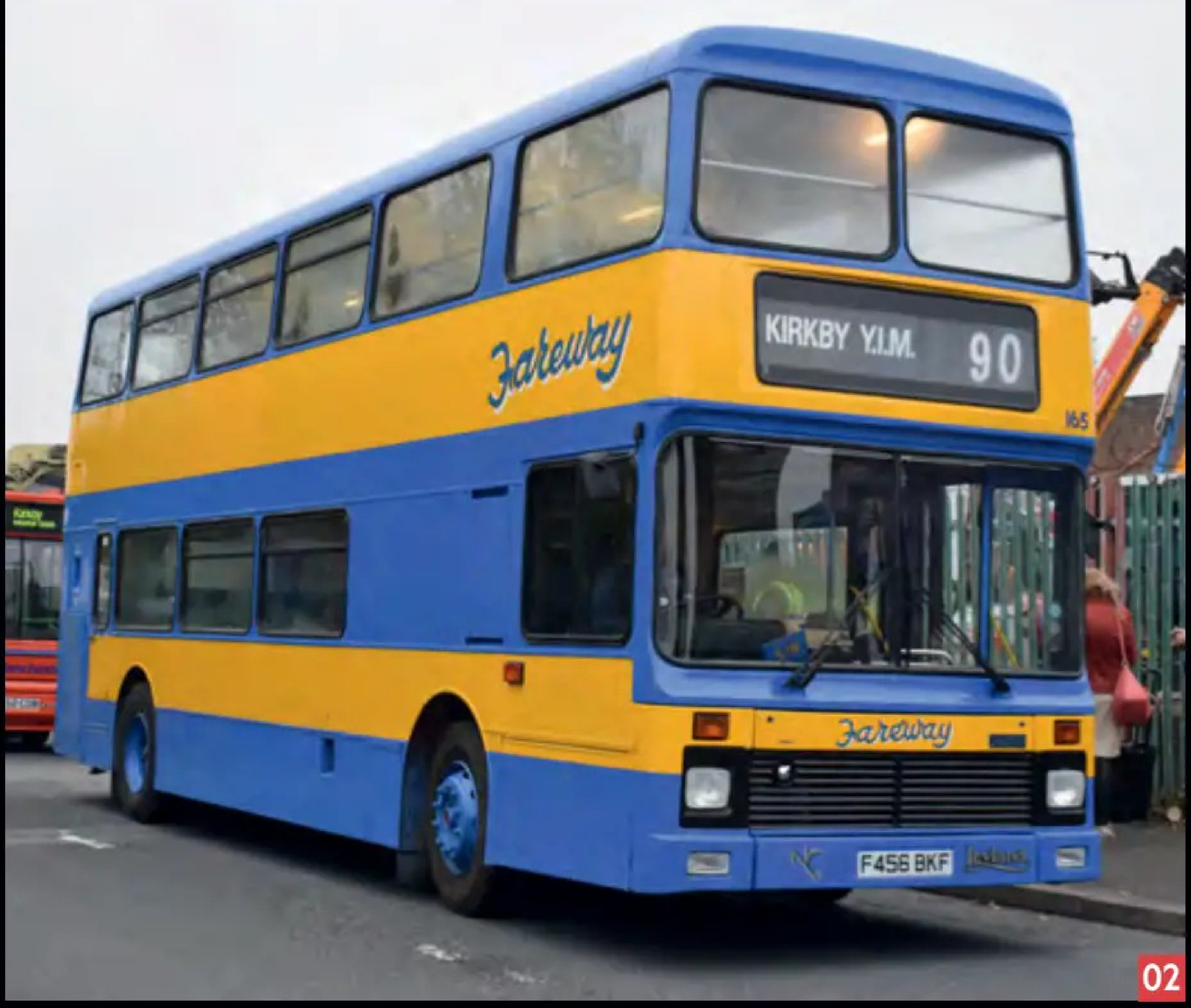
11 Canvey retrospect. The last new bus allocated to Canvey depot was 1973 Leyland National CY1725 (NEV 682M), one of the first allocated to the Southend area. It displays the kind of frontal damage common to this type in early days, but never seen on ECW-bodied Bristols. It later became the final bus to run into Canvey Depot for EN. **JOHN G. LIDSTONE**


Finchley Road
Baker St. Oxford Cir.
Piccadilly Circus
Charing + Cannon St.
15
HILLINGDON STATION
UX 115
LONDON TRANSPORT
RT 3314
LYR 533
10

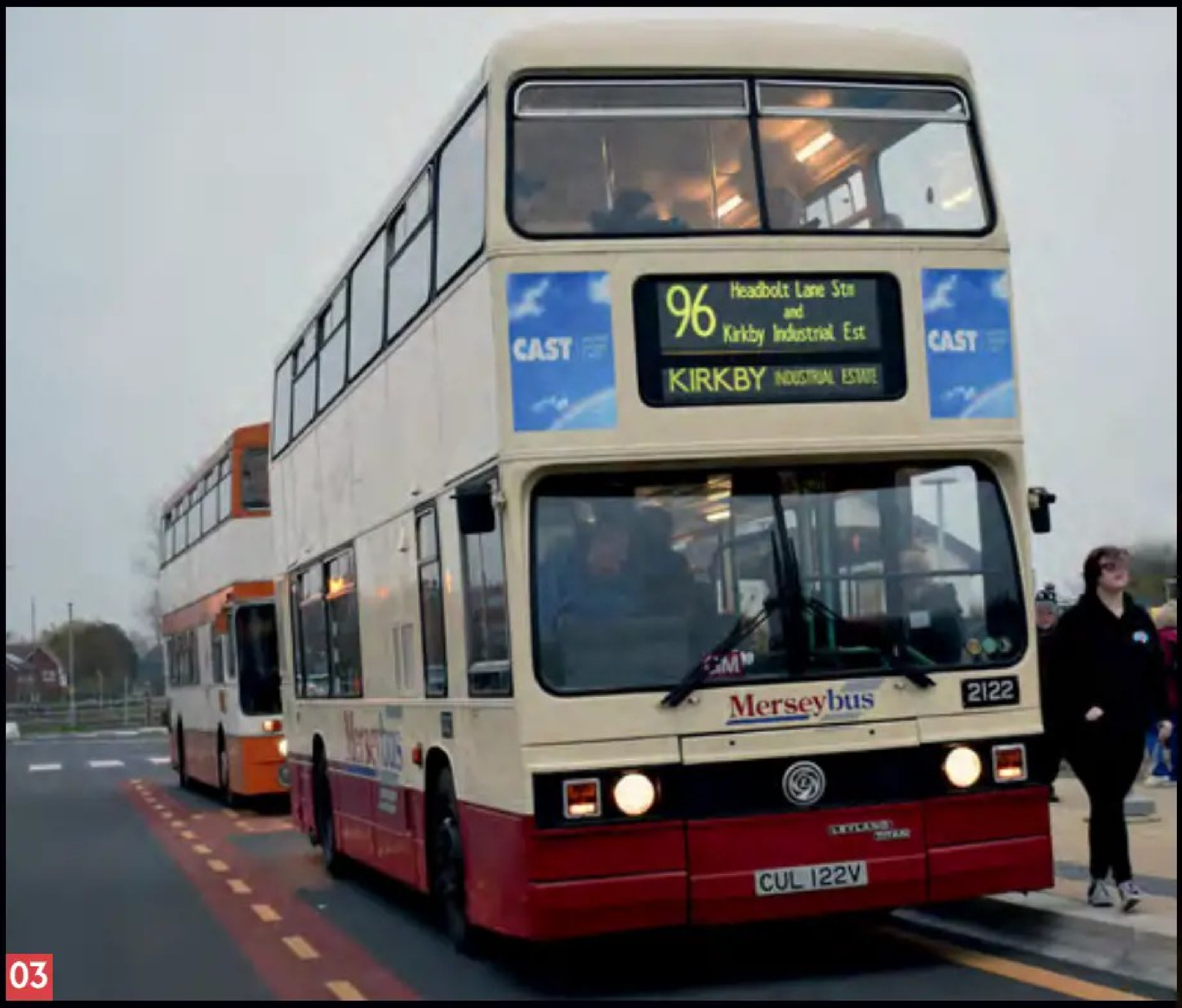
01

Nocturnal NWVRT

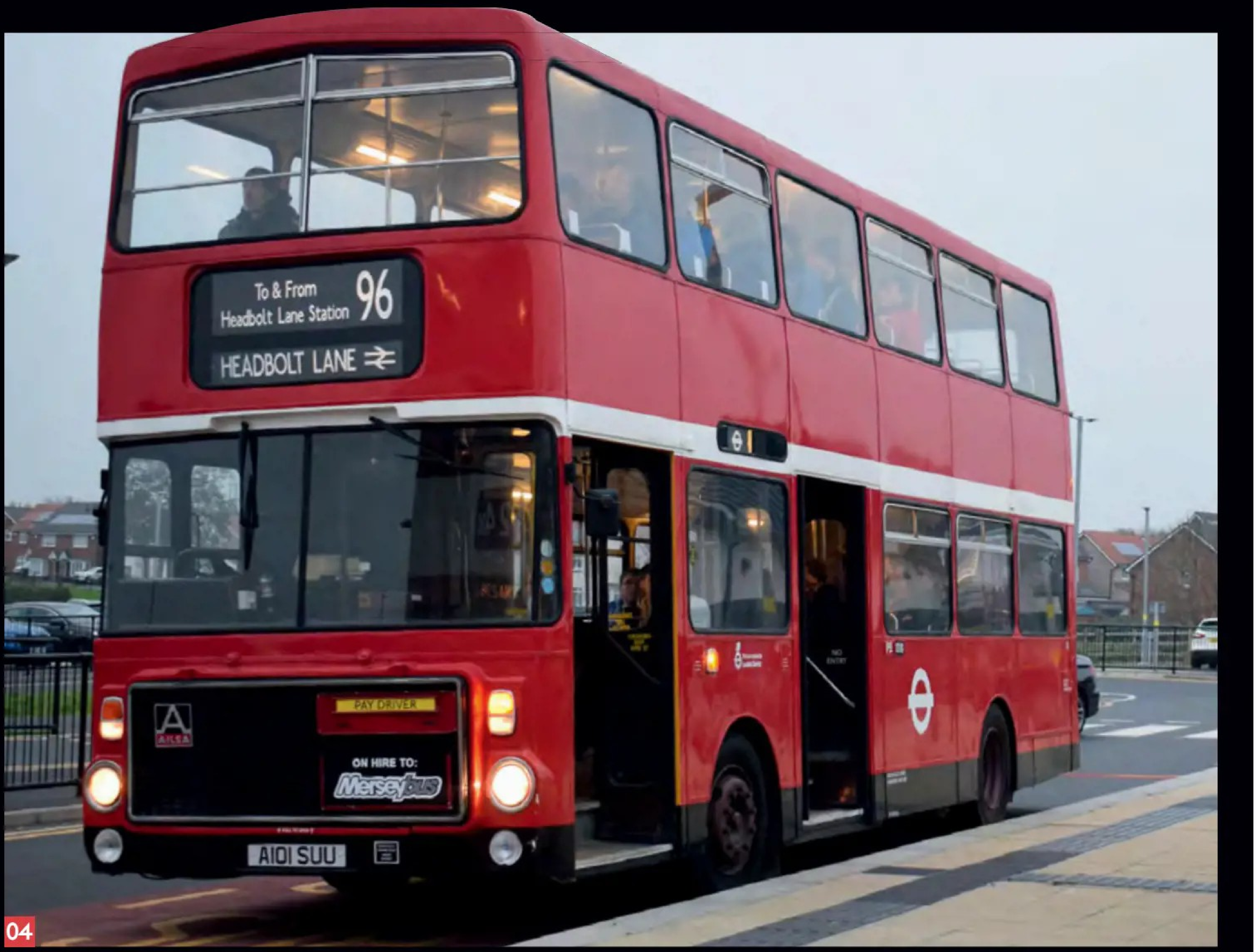
PHILIP LAMB attends the North West Vehicle Restoration Trust's second nocturnal event on Saturday 9 November 2024.


Fareway
KIRKBY Y.I.M. 90
165
F456 BKF

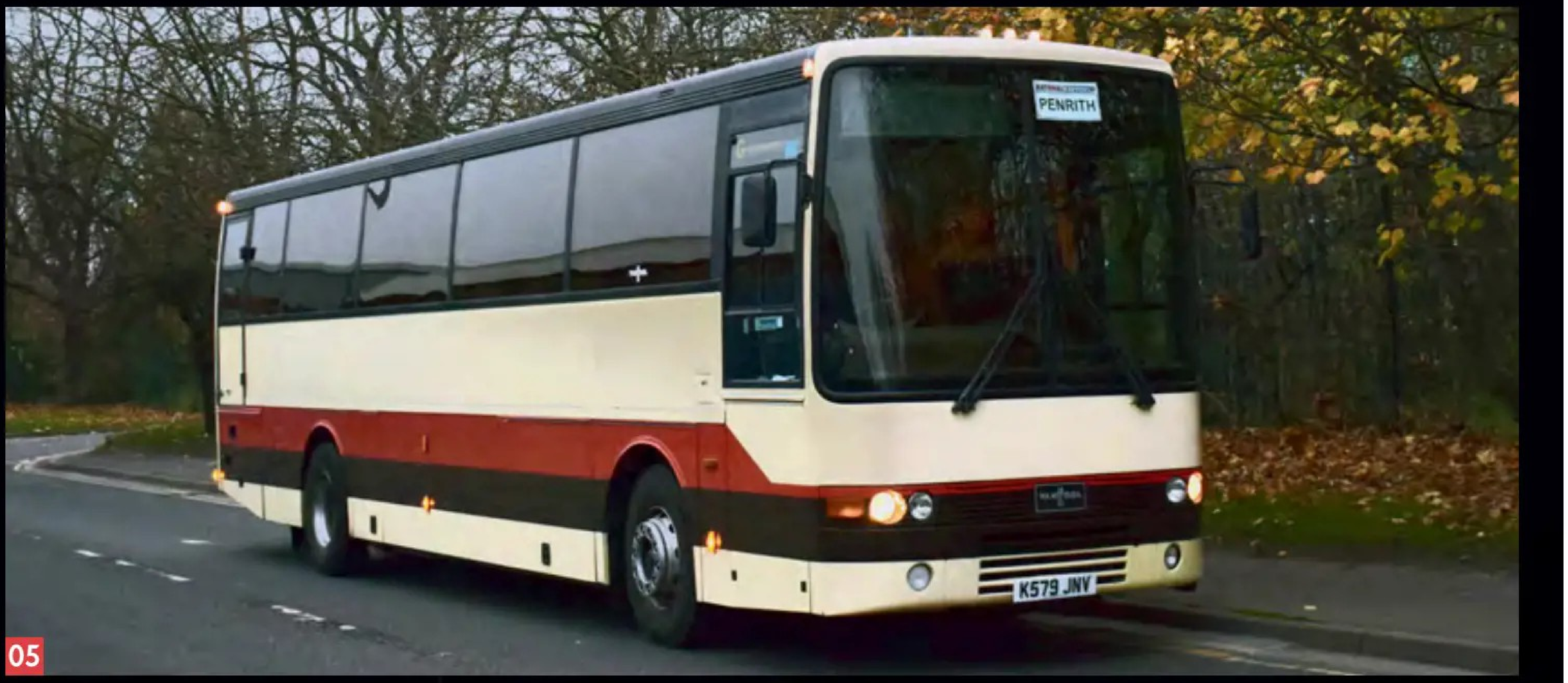
02


96
Headbolt Lane Stn and Kirkby Industrial Est
KIRKBY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
CAST
Merseybus
2122
CUL 122V

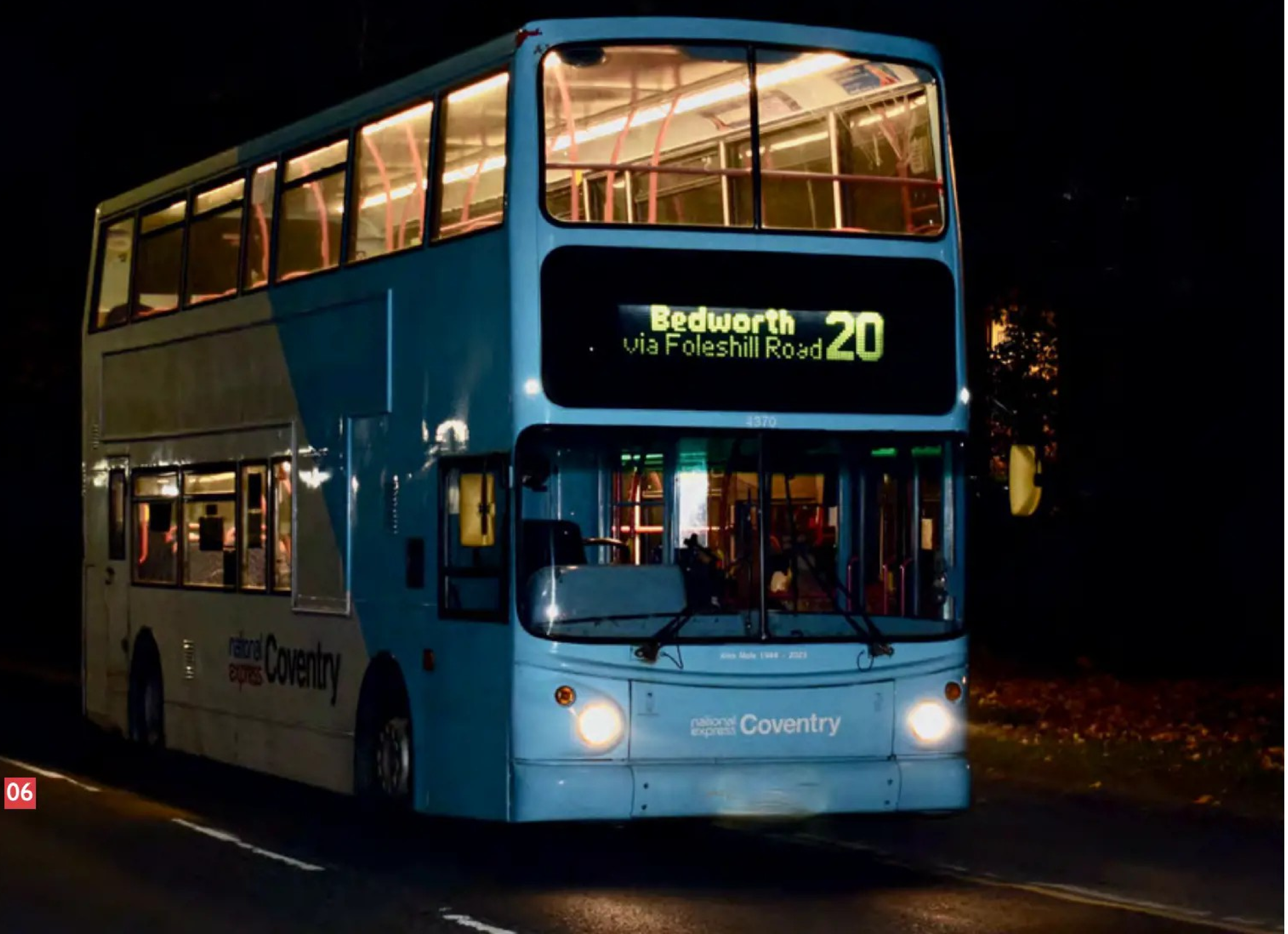
03


To & From
Headbolt Lane Station 96
HEADBOLT LANE
PAY DRIVER
ON HIRE TO:
Merseybus
A101 SUU

04


PENRITH
K579 JNV

05


Bedworth 20
via Foleshill Road
4370
national express Coventry

06

01 Awaiting return to West Yorkshire was Greg Lawson's RT3314 (LYR 533) following a wedding hire It was withdrawn from London service as long ago as 1977.

02 Fareway, based in Kirkby, was one of a number of quality operators to emerge in Liverpool as a result of deregulation in 1986. In 1989, it purchased 10 Northern Counties Palatine-bodied Leyland Olympians including No 165 (F456 BKF), which is currently preserved at the North West Vehicle Restoration Trust.

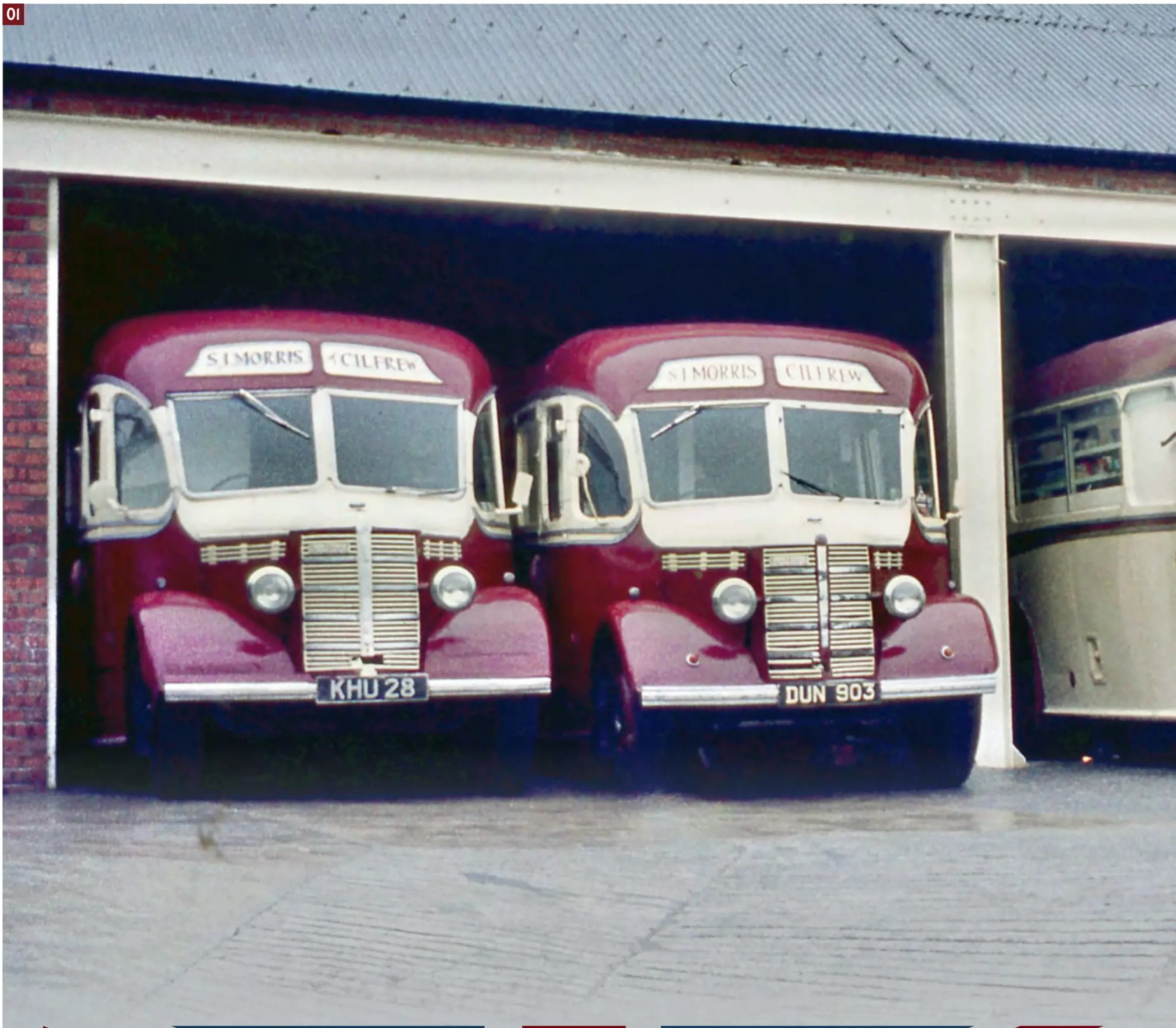
03 Former London Leyland Titan T122 (CUL122V) was converted to single-door and sold to MTL in 1994 as its 2022. It is preserved at Kirkby by James Rowlands.

04 Seen at Headbolt Lane station is former London Buses 1984 Alexander-bodied Volvo Ailsa V1 (A101 SUU), best known for its days at Black Prince of Morley, not forgetting that it was at one-time a member of MTL's Sightseers fleet.

05 New as 153 WAR to Richmonds of Barley near Royston, K579 JNV is a Van Hool Alizee-bodied Volvo B10M passing to Robinsons of Kimbolton in 2008 and now acquired for preservation by Andy Rigby, enabling attendance at events far and wide.

06 Recently preserved National Express Coventry 4370 (BV52 OAU) is a Dennis Trident 2 with Alexander ALX400 bodywork, which has been a familiar sight at events during 2024.

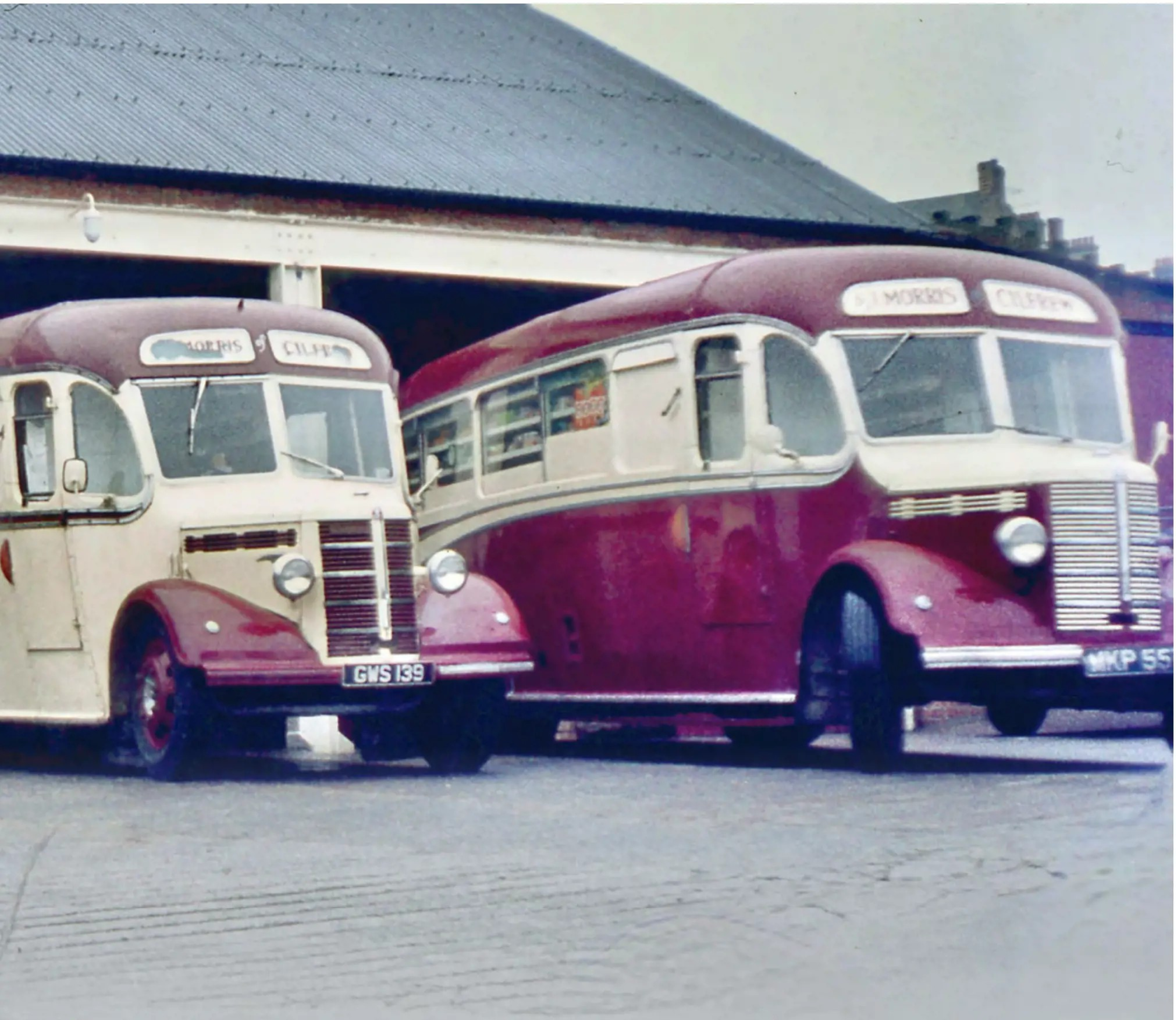
01



The Bedford OB – 85 Glorious Years

A 'Coaching Classics' with a difference this month celebrating 85 years since the first examples took to the roads and the announcement by EFE Road of a revamped version of its 1/76th scale model of this all-time classic British coach. In a slight departure from our usual format, in which we do not use preserved examples to illustrate this feature, we have decided to include some in the line-up, which follows as colour pictures of these coaches in service are few and far between. Additionally, we have not included full vehicles descriptions except where these are relevant, as in many cases these are complicated, long-winded and involved.

Pictures: PRESBUS ARCHIVE



01 Again in a departure from the norm, we begin with four OBs whose coaching days were over! The four machines captured here were in the ownership of Morris of Cilfrew near Neath, who operated OBs as mobile shops in the area for years. Close examination of the coaches reveals boarded windows etc, tell-tell signs of their role at the time. They are from the left: KHU 28, new in 1947 to Jordan of Bristol (later to form part of Wessex, Bristol. This OB survives and is currently scheduled for restoration; DUN 903 which had been new in 1947 to Pye of Rhos-on-Sea; GWS 139 new in 1949 to Reid & MacKay, Edinburgh, which today is preserved as Crosville SL29 although it never actually ran with that operator and finally MKP 557 new in 1950 to Mannifield of Sevenoaks. This later passed to an owner in Morriston, Swansea for restoration, but nothing further is known.

THE BEDFORD OB

The Bedford OB, the successor to the Bedford WTB, had a 14ft 6in wheelbase, was of semi-forward control configuration and designed to carry up to 29 passengers. Fitted with a 28hp petrol engine, a four-speed manual gearbox and a fully floating rear axle, the brakes were of the servo-assisted hydraulic type.

Although only 73 were built prior to the cessation of production due to World War 2, it reappeared largely unchanged at the end of the war, continuing in production until 1951. A total of 12,766 were produced, making it one of the most popular buses of its type ever.

Bedford co-developed with Duple the Vista coachwork for the OB. The price of a complete coach, including finishing in a two-colour livery, was £1,314.10s 0d for a 27-seater, and £1,325.10s 0d for a 29-seater.

WARTIME OWB

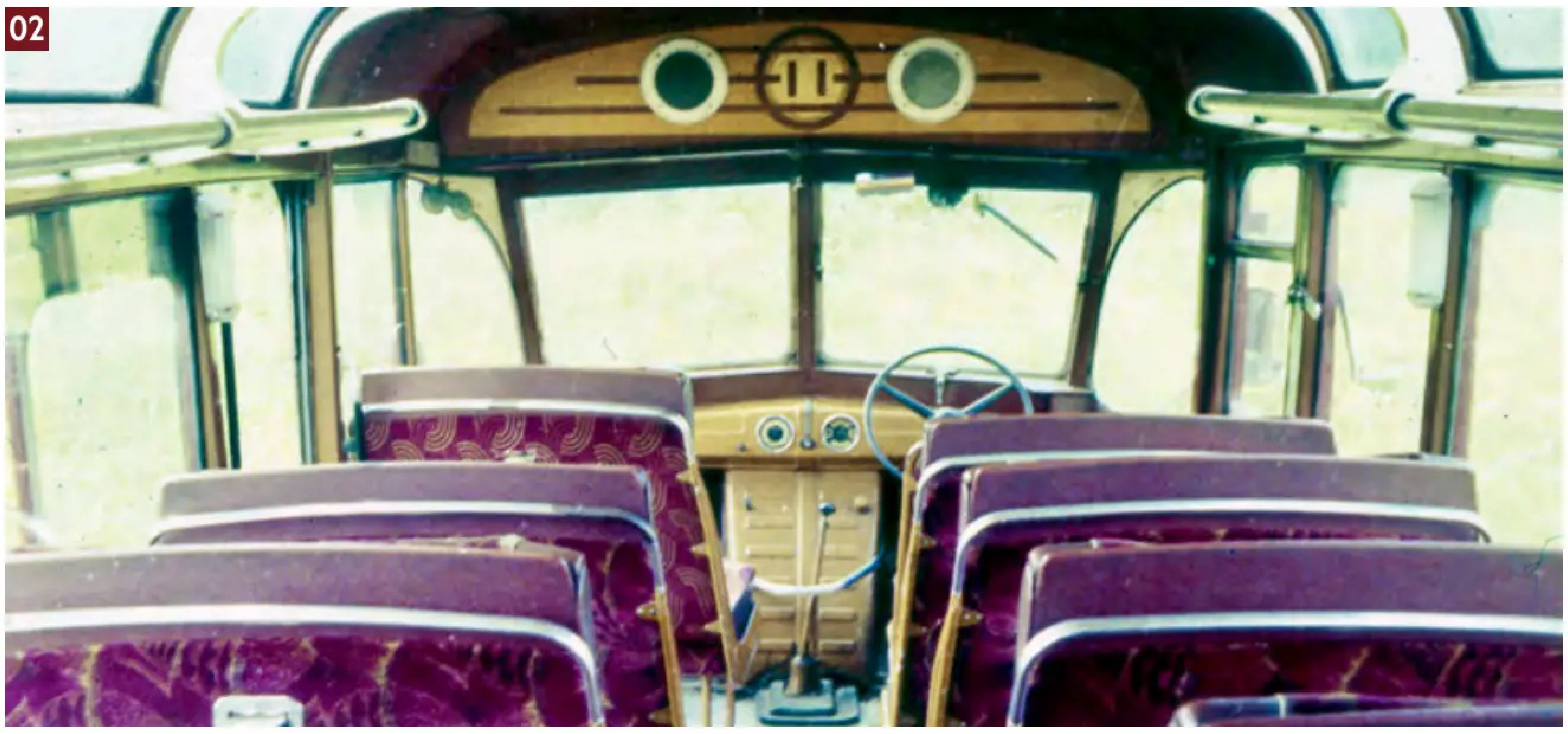
The Bedford OWB chassis was produced during the war to the same basic design as the OB, but replacing valuable metals, like aluminium, with cast iron, and fitted with austere bodywork and interior featuring 32 seats with no upholstery, just wooden slats. Most bodies were built by Duple whilst others, using Duple drawings, were built by Charles H. Roe, Mulliner and Scottish Motor Transport. Total OWB production amounted to 3,398, finishing in late-1945.

02 A typical Bedford OB interior.

03 With an SMT-built body, HTC 661 was new to Dean and Punder of Morecambe in 1947, the business being acquired soon afterwards by a Mr Ken Pinder who traded as Ken's Coaches. Having spent many years with Calvary Coaches, Washington, with which it is seen here in April 1977, it is currently under long-term restoration with Colin Simmons of Ibstock.

04 FVJ 664 was new in 1948 to Wye Valley Motors of Hereford and is pictured here whilst still in service with its original operator.

02



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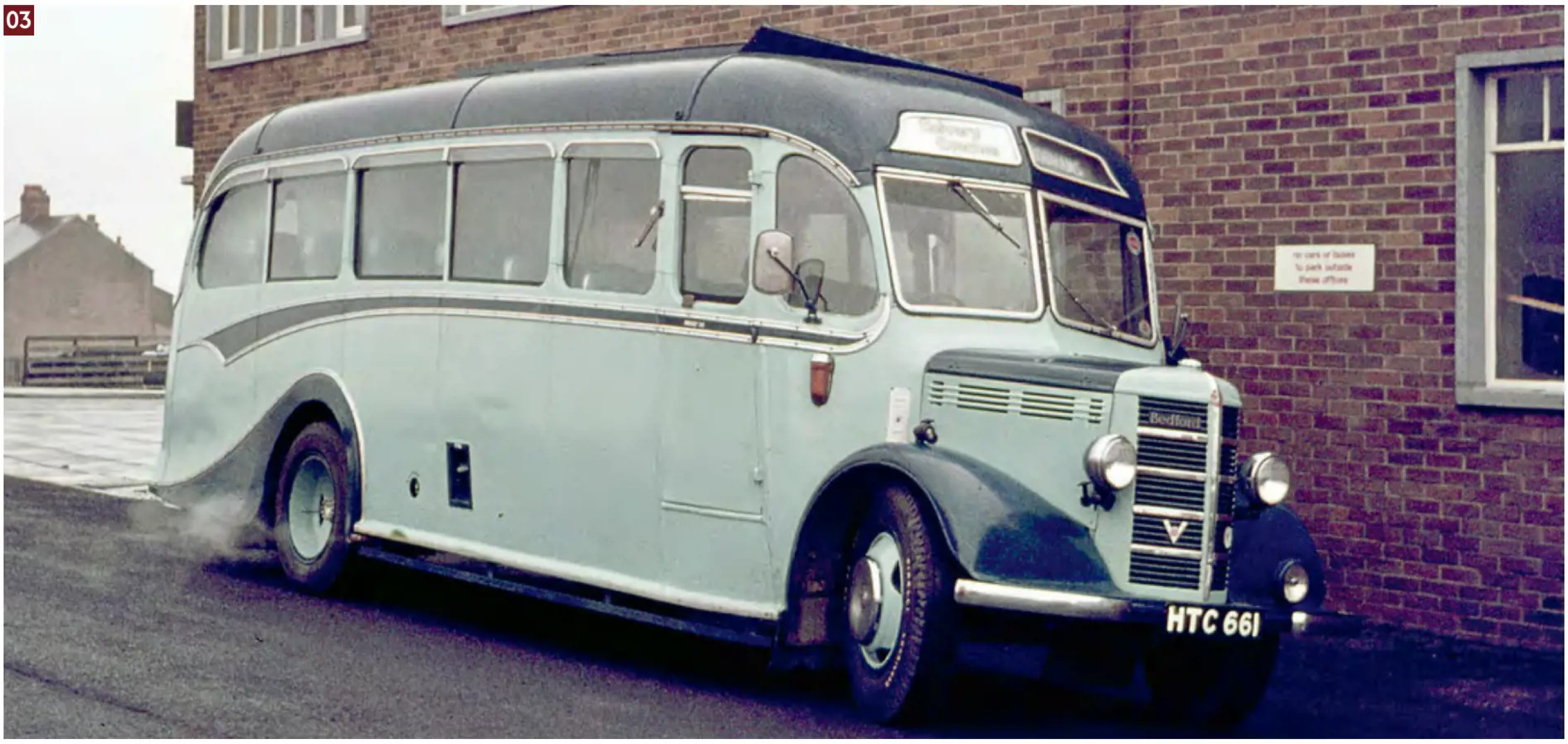

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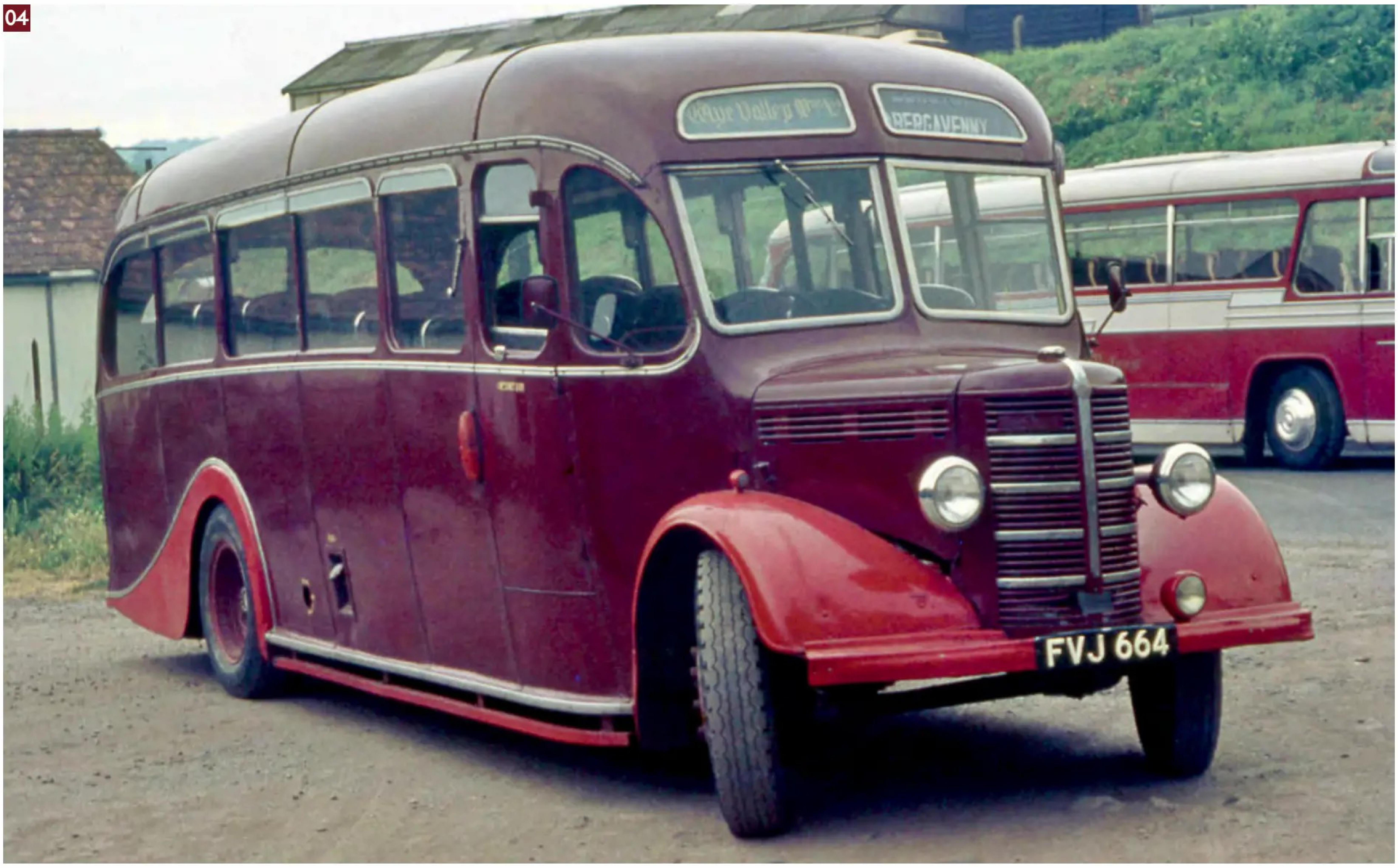

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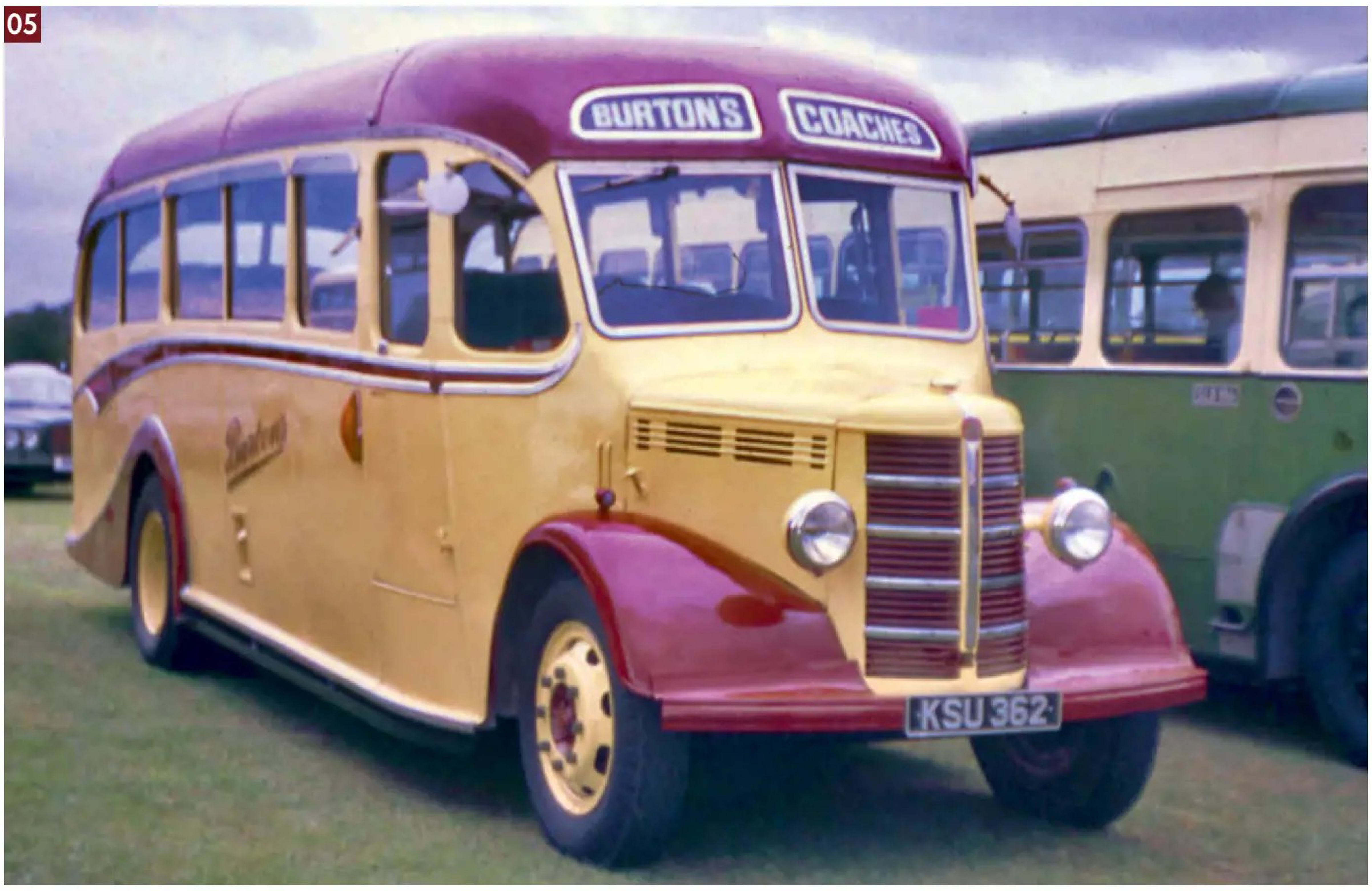
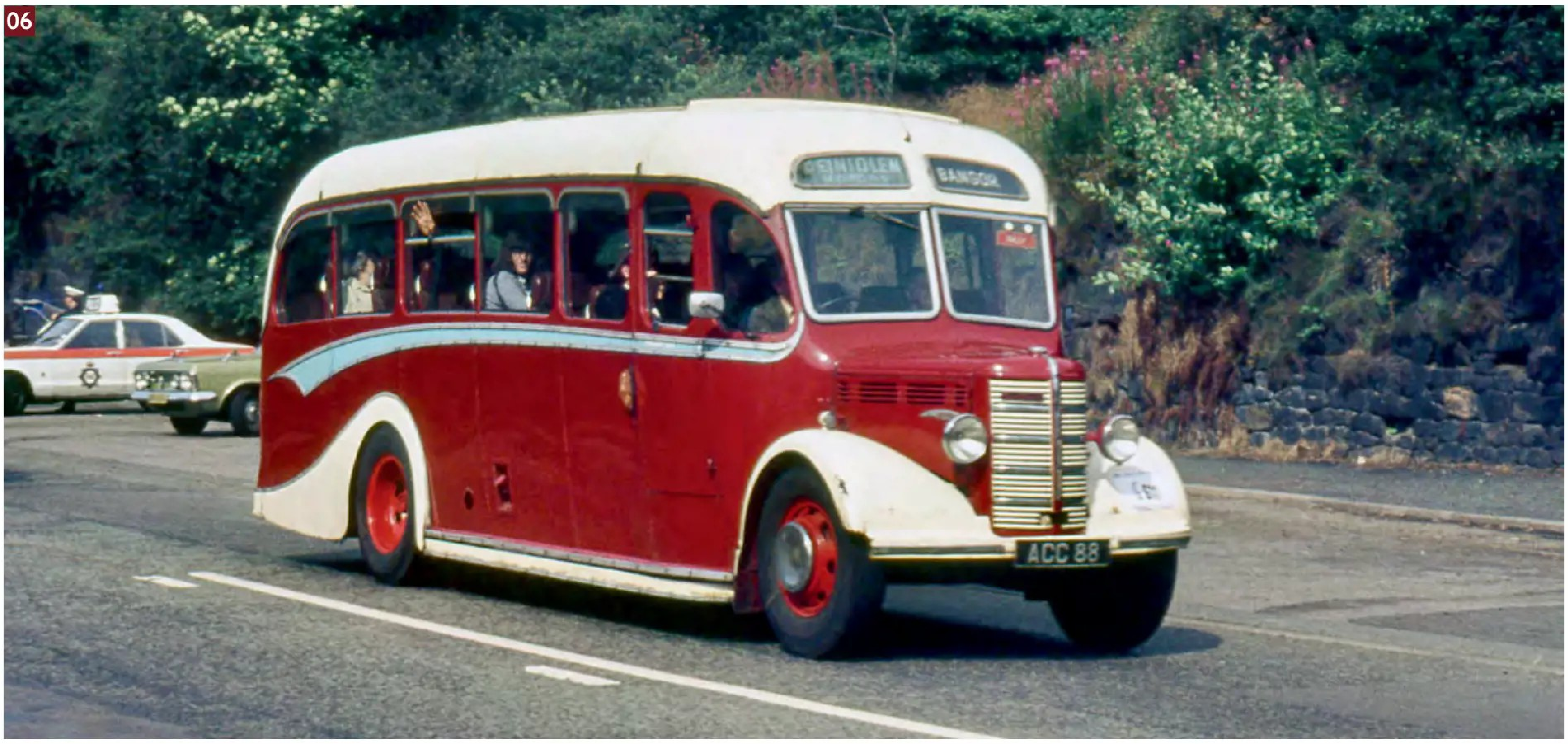


05 KSU 362 was new as KKN 752 to Eglinton of Sittingbourne in 1948. It was last recorded with Mayne of Buckie but is seen here with long-term intermediate owner Burtons Coaches at a rally at Harrogate in August 1992.

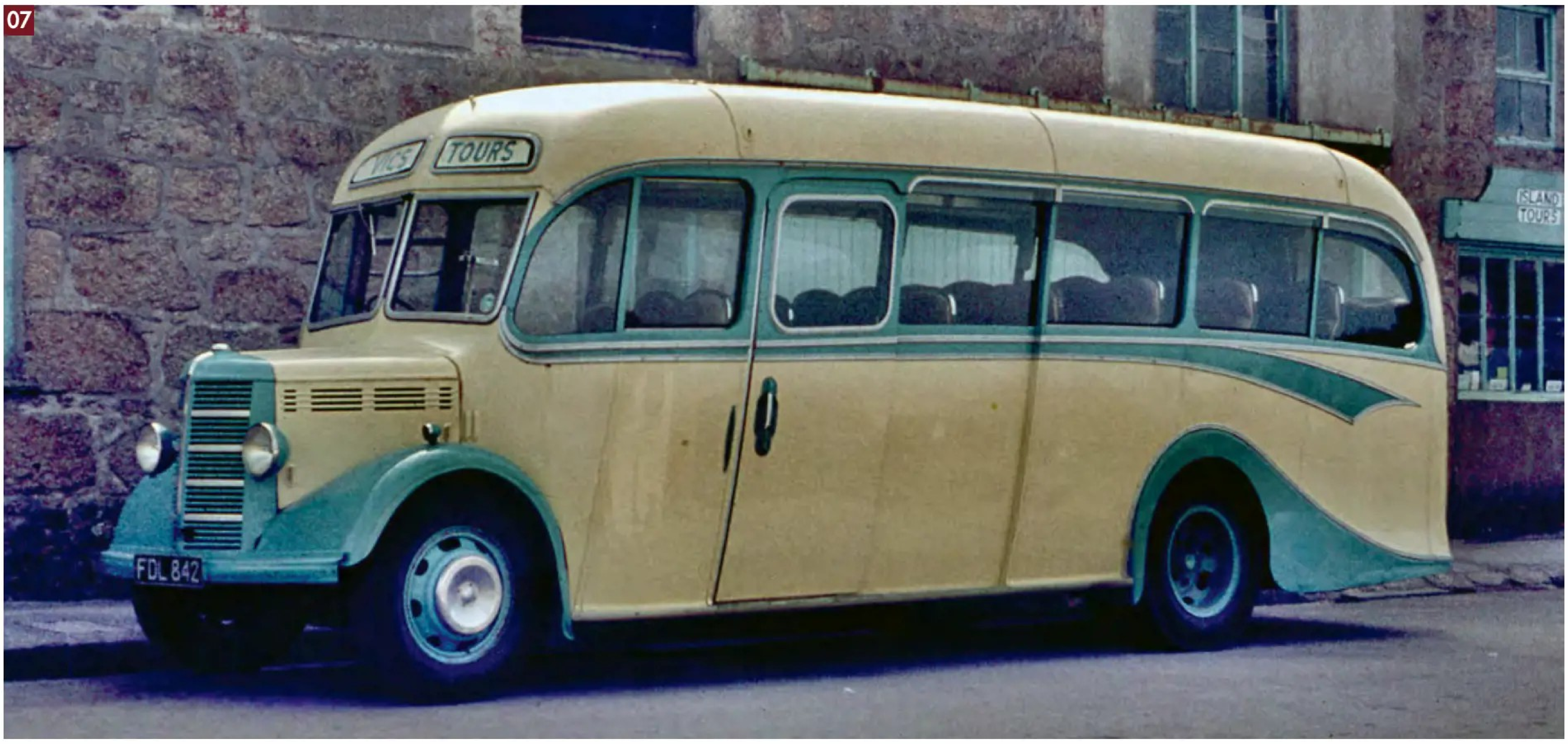
06 New to Jones & Davies (Deinolen Motors) in 1949, ACC 88 was not withdrawn until the end of the 1972 season. At the time of this view, the coach was preserved, restored to Deinolen Motors livery.

07 The Bedford OB was popular with Isle-of-Wight operators, where the 'Round-The-Island' tour reigned supreme. FDL 842 was new in 1949 to White Heather of Ryde, but later spent a couple of decades plying its trade much further west on the Scilly Isles with Vic's Tours It is now based on the mainland and has recently been sold to a new owner

06



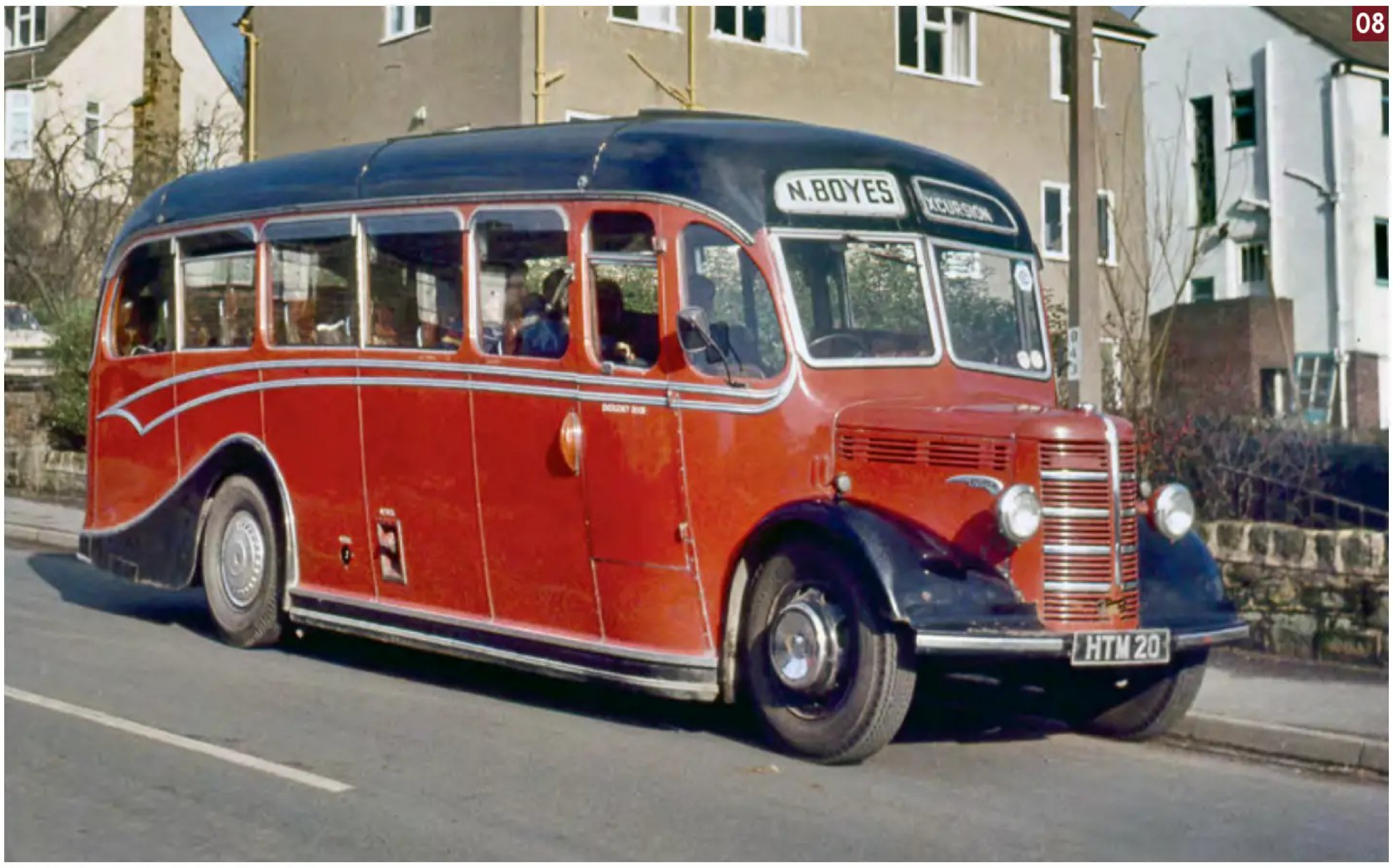
07

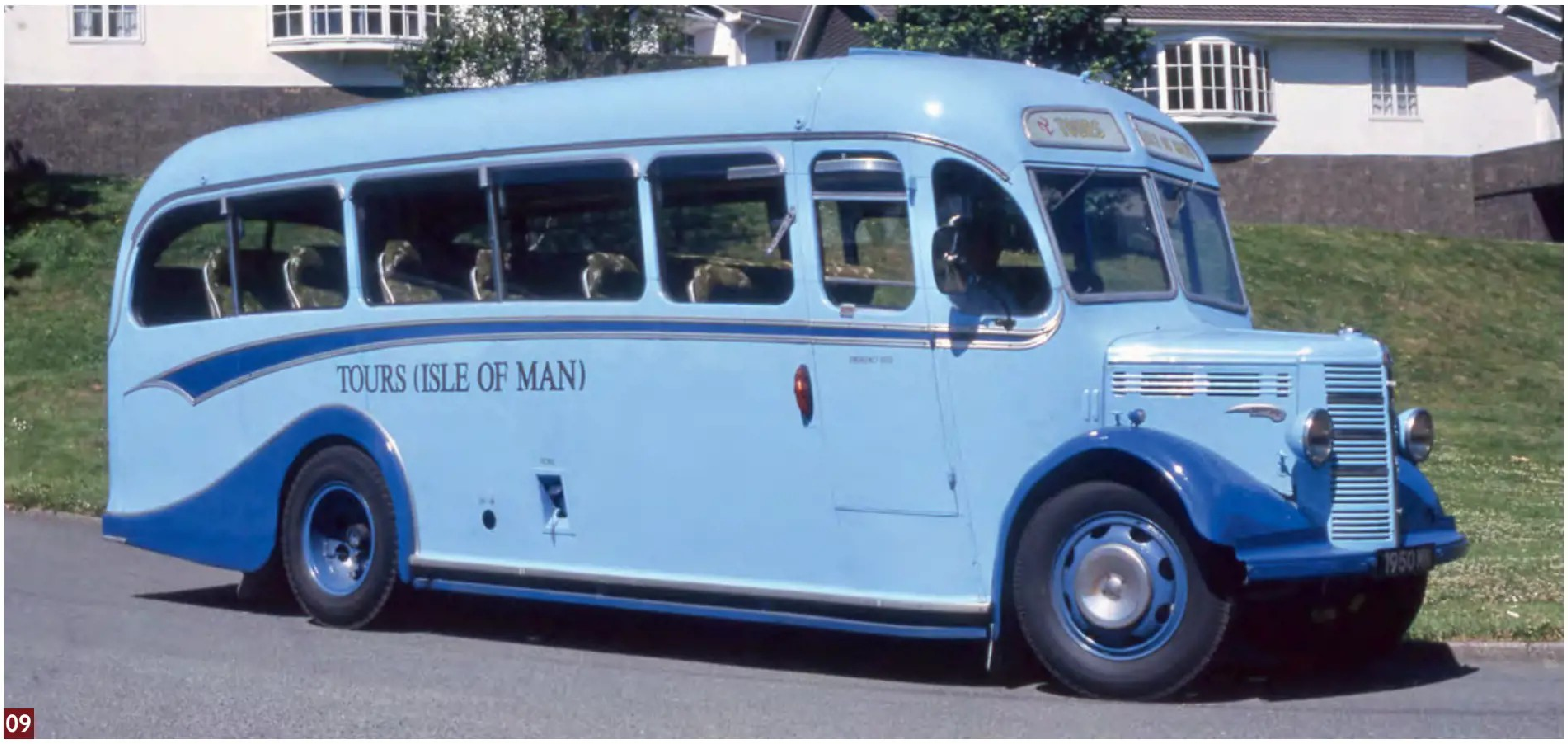


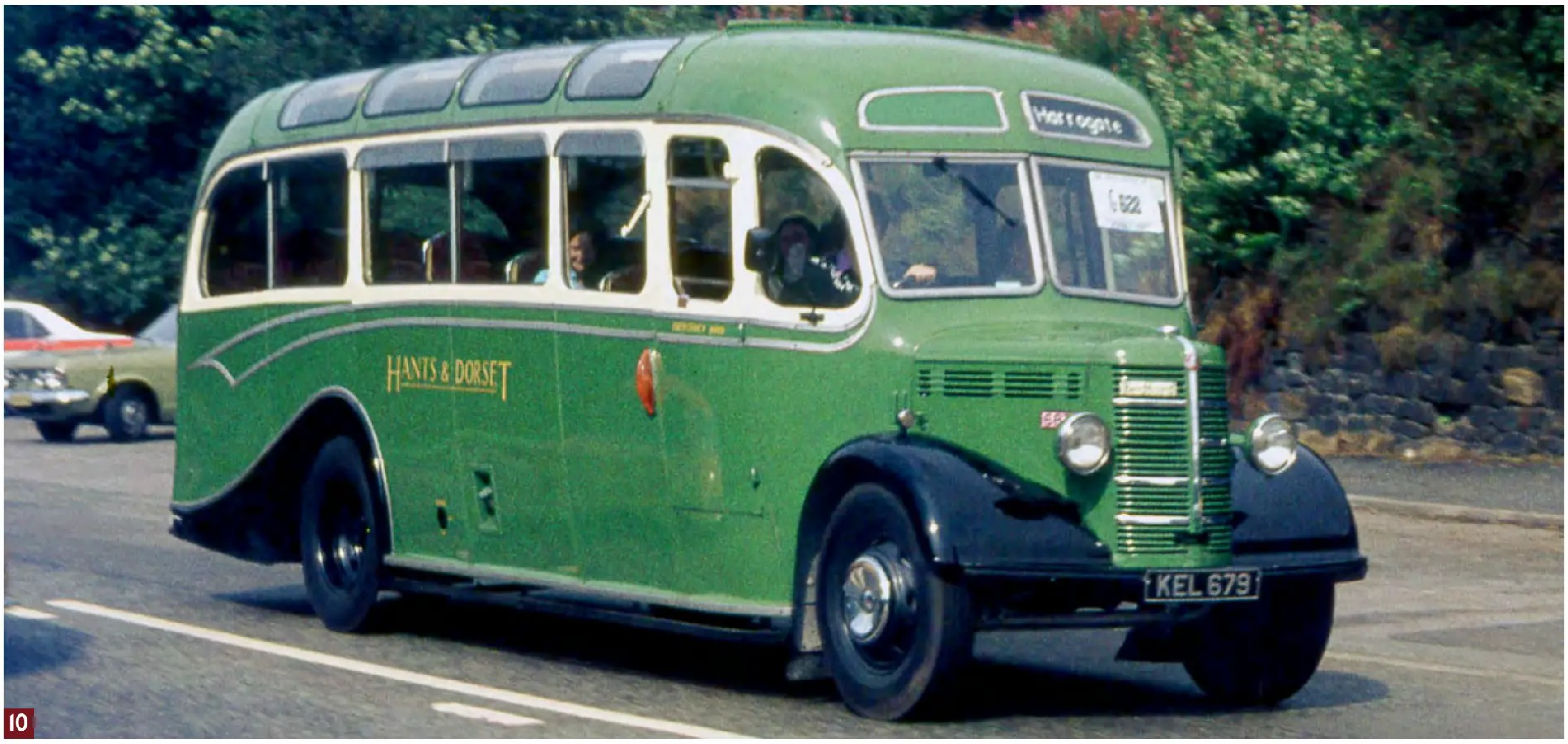
08 HTM 20 had been new in 1950 to Bailey of Turvey in Bedfordshire. It later saw service with Tours, IoM (see below), but is seen here in Boyes of Wyke livery in which fleet it ran for many years.

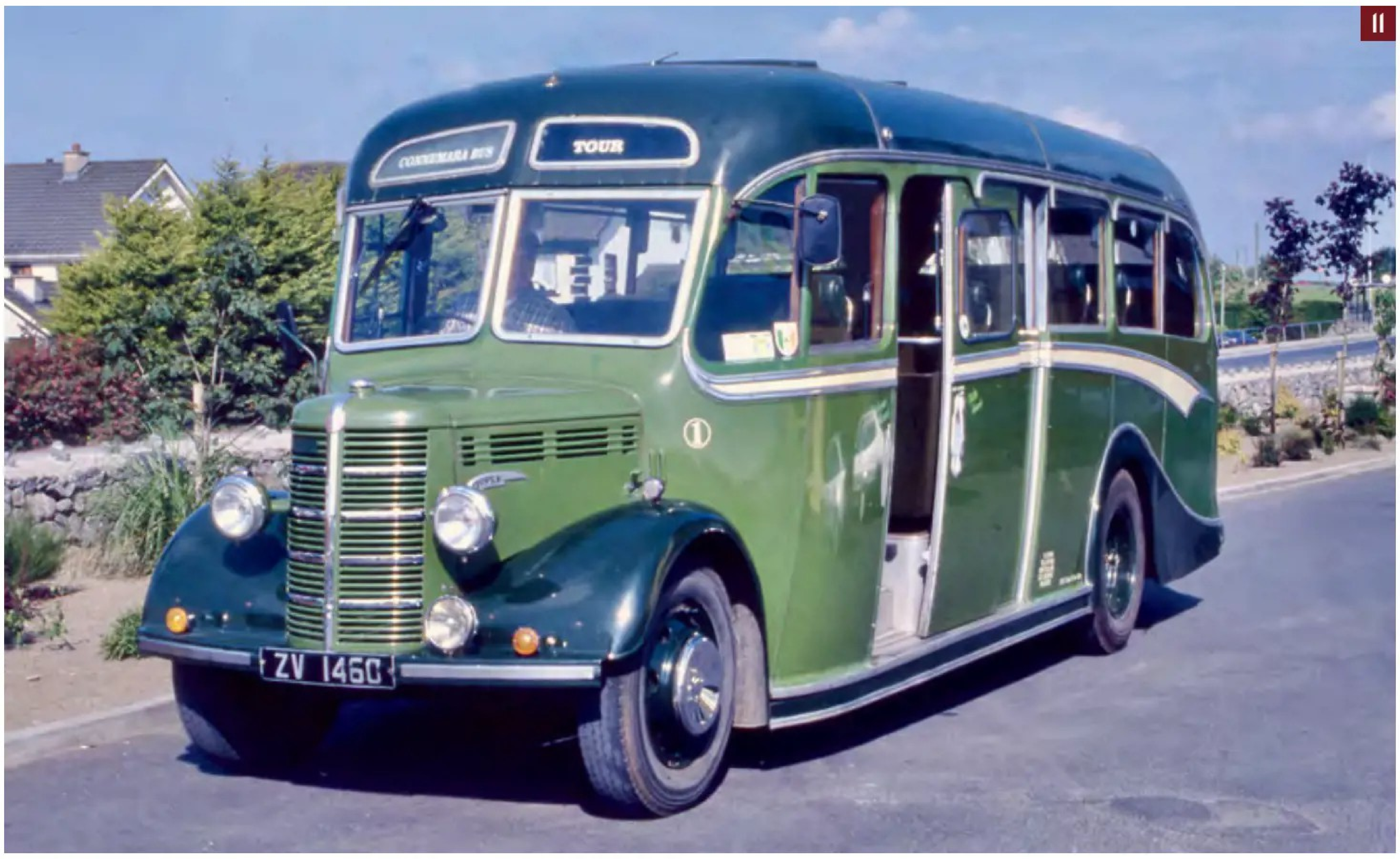
09 And here it is again, now with Tours IoM as 1950 MN in August 1996. It was re registered BVH 319A prior to going to the IoM with HTM 20 being transferred to a car. It passed to Yorkshire Bus & Coach in 2016.

10 Once a familiar sight on the rally scene was KEL 679, new in 1950 to Hants & Dorset, restored and displayed in H&D livery. By 2012 it had been despatched to Express Coachworks in Pickering for a full restoration, but nothing further has been heard or seen of it.

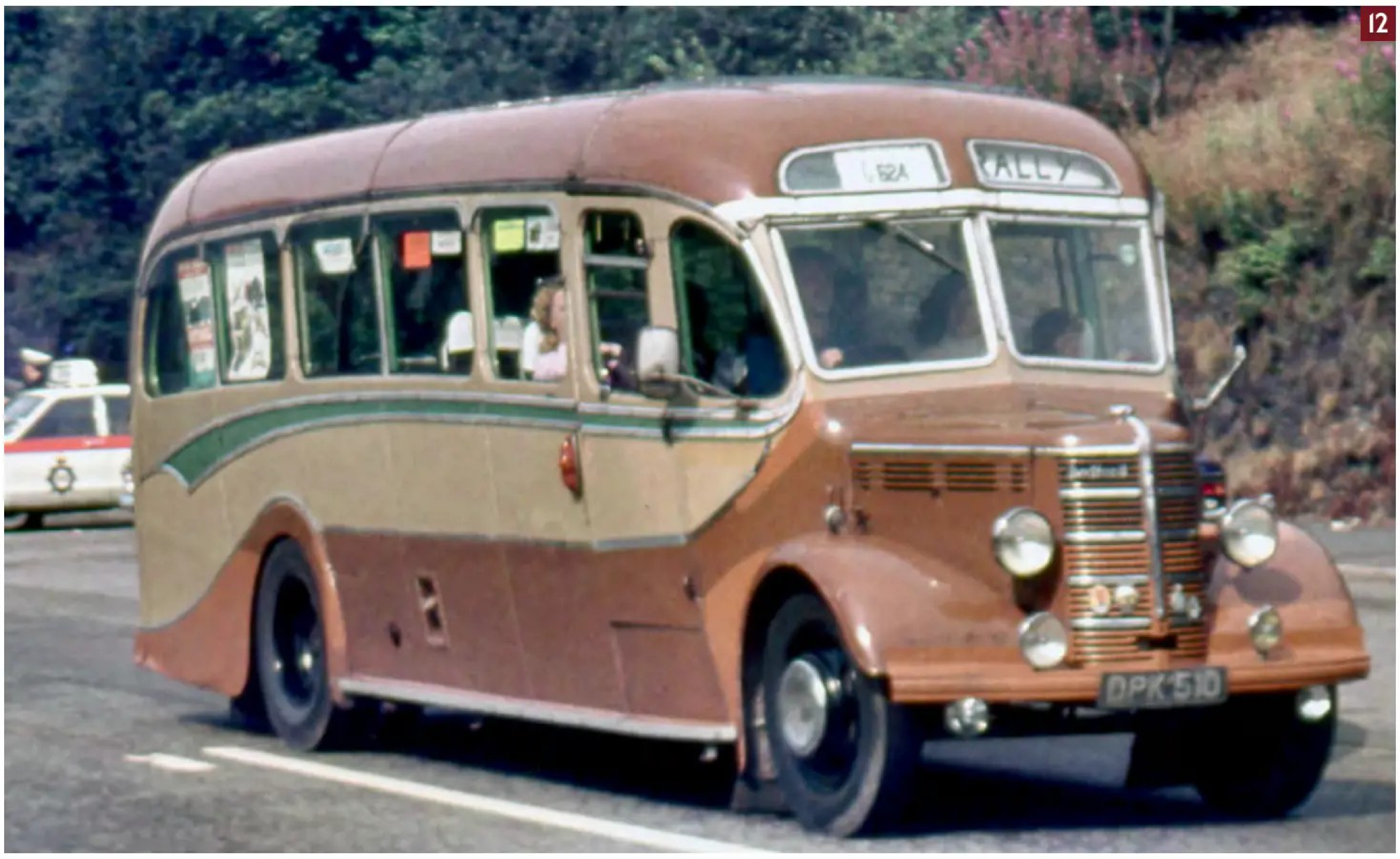

08
N.BOYES
EXCURSION
HTM 20


09
TOURS (ISLE OF MAN)
1950 MN


10
Harrogate
HANTS & DORSET
KEL 679

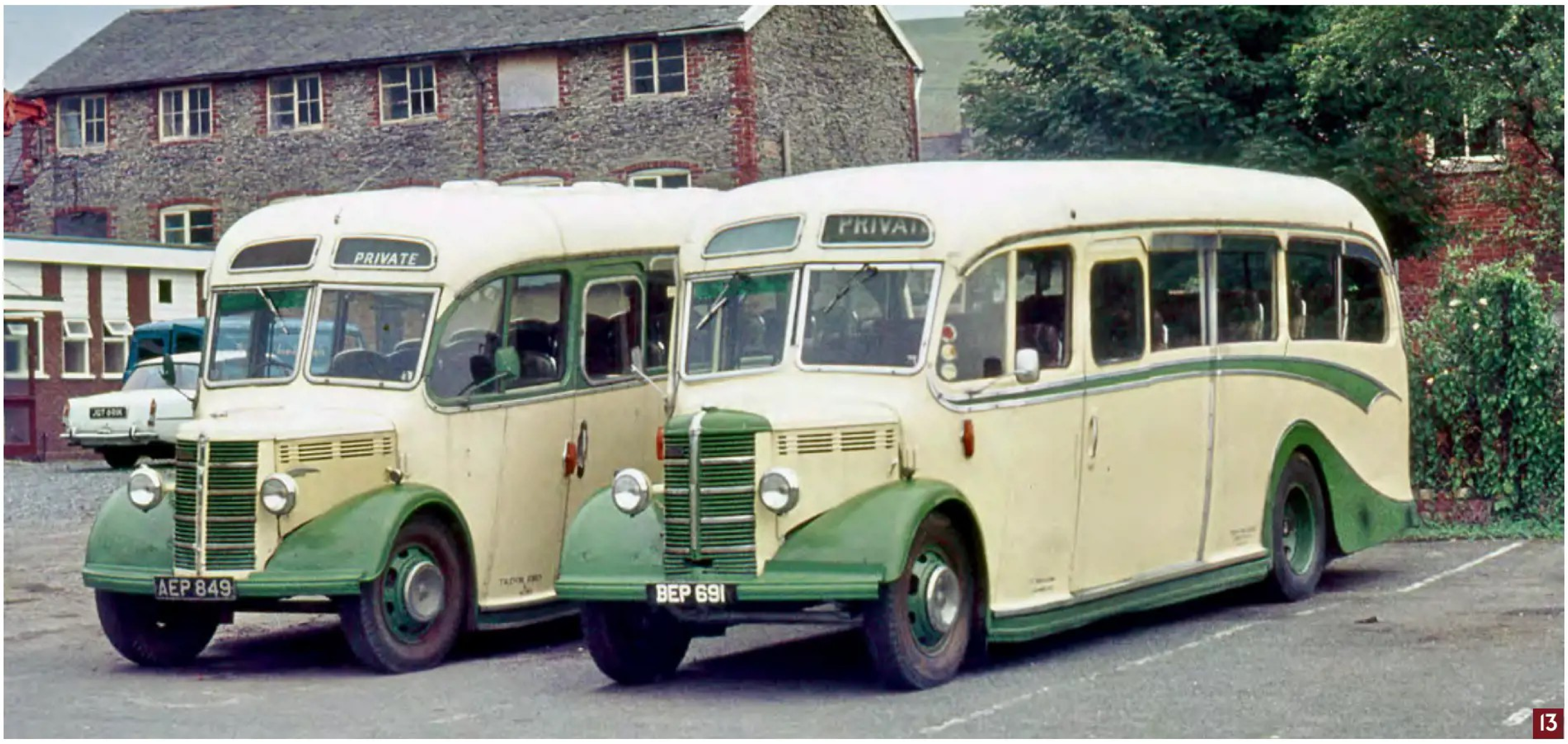


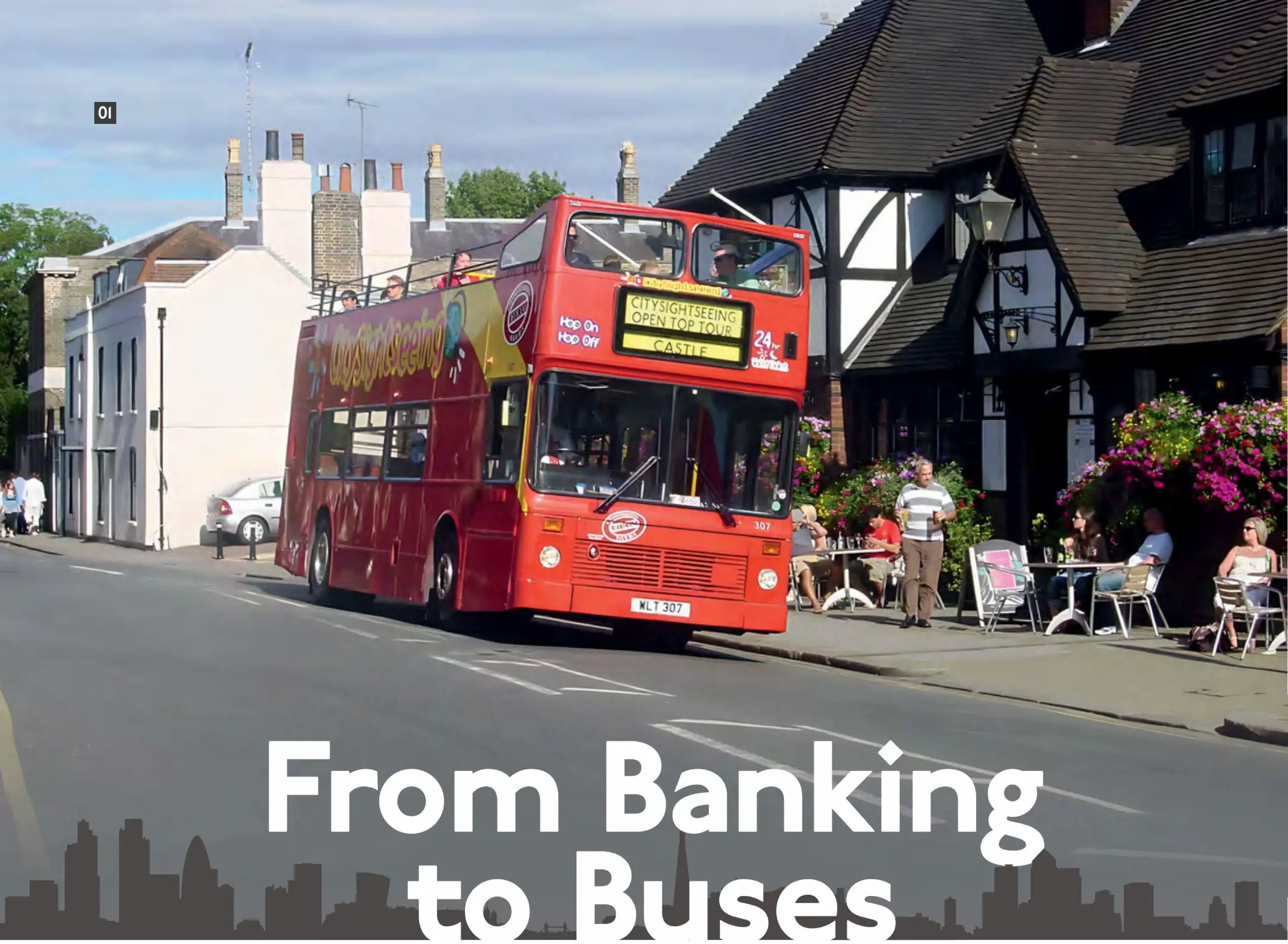
11 Seen in the Republic of Ireland in service with Connemara Bus and registered ZV 1460 is LYC 731, new to Blagdon Lioness in 1950. Upon return to these shores, the coach passed to Express Motors, which subsequently ceased trading, with no further information currently available.



12 An example of what happens when you deviate from the norm! This oddly liveried Bedford OB was new to Cooke of Stoughton near Guildford in 1950. In 1972, OPK 510 passed into preservation with a Mr Heslop of Manchester and was scrapped in 1979.

13 Bedford OBs in regular service were becoming rare by 1974, although a few were to be found in mid-Wales. On the left is AEP 849 , new in 1949 to Owen of Berriew. It was sold to Trevor Jones (Mid Wales Motorways) of Llanidloes in December 1970 joining another OB, BEP 691 which he had from new. The pair is seen here. AEP 849 eventually became a traveller's home and although did not survive to be preserved itself, it was used to provide spares for the restoration of Liverpool airport coach TMM 191 by a member of the Merseyside Transport. As mentioned, BEP 691 was new to Mid Wales in June 1950. Upon withdrawal it was sold to a Mr Kinchin-Smith of Newbridge-on-Wye as a caravan by July 1982, before passing to Colin Judge of Oxford for spares and was scrapped in 1985.





From Banking to Buses

ASHLEY BLACKMAN has dinner with **BOB STANGER** in York to learn about his passion for London Transport and how he went from a corporate job in banking to his dream of driving buses.

'Get a job for life, son.' Those words echoed in my ears as my father offered me advice before my final school exams. As with so many others of my generation, there was a belief in stable careers that would span decades. Little did I know that my journey would take me from a traditional banking career to the driver's seat of classic London buses, transporting everything from tourists to wedding guests and even marathon runners. But before we dive into that, let me take you back to the start.

01 Ex-Metrobus Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties approaches Windsor Castle during an afternoon run on the City Sightseeing Tour.

02 RCL2260, RT3228 and CRL4 at the site of the former Godstone garage captured during a Classic London Bus Society Tour recreating the final Green Line route 709.

THE EARLY YEARS: A PASSION FOR BUSES TAKES ROOT

My introduction to London Buses came at the early age of four, when I insisted on not crossing the road with my mother until a distant bus had passed. I remember that it was a bus with a forward-entrance; I now know it was a STL working route 321/351 from Watford High Street garage (WA). I, like a number of my fellow volunteers and London Bus Museum (LBM) members, were weaned on Ian Allan spotter's books! Ian Allan supplied bus and train books from a family-sized suitcase to willing purchasers who spotted buses and trains from a pathway adjacent to the main line at Watford Junction.

Spring and summer evenings saw me either at the 'Junction' or the crossroads in the centre of town where I feasted on a diet of green and red RTs, the latter on routes 142 and 158: Park Royal, Weymann, Saunders and Cravens varieties. My love affair with RTLs was ignited when one Saturday they appeared on the 142, with a new roster allocated to Cricklewood (W). RFs a plenty, now from Garston (GR) and Hemel Hempstead (HH), RLHs from Amersham (MA), Express services 803 and 375, and subsequently RWs, RMLs and dare I mention MB/MBS?

My journey to school in Rickmansworth necessitated a bus ride and, turning right out of my house, it would be an RT outside the Methodist Church in Whippendell Road. Left would find the 07:43 ex-Garston Garage GS on the 361 positioning journey. An extra 5min walk would see me reach Watford Metropolitan station, where the aforementioned RLHs would be my chariot. I may well have travelled on LBMs very own RLH48 allocated to Amersham garage during this period.

Like many, the front nearside seat of the RTs and RLHs was my aim, viewing the driver operating the pre-select gears and, in many cases, sitting almost sideways in the driving seat. I was able to ascertain why many years later.

Express Route 803 passed me by, not stopping at the church, but it always fascinated me with the blue blinds along with 'Express' being associated with speed of journey as per the 'Coronation' and 'Princess' class steam locomotives thundering through Watford Junction station. I longed to be an 803 passenger, eventually taking a summer holiday day trip from Rickmansworth to Uxbridge.

Becoming older and now in possession of a bike, during holidays I often cycled to Hatfield to see green RTLs, cementing my interest in this sub-class of the RT family, and to Aldenham Works to note the sparkling overhauled buses and the staff buses exiting the works like a snake.

FROM BANKING TO THE DRIVER'S SEAT

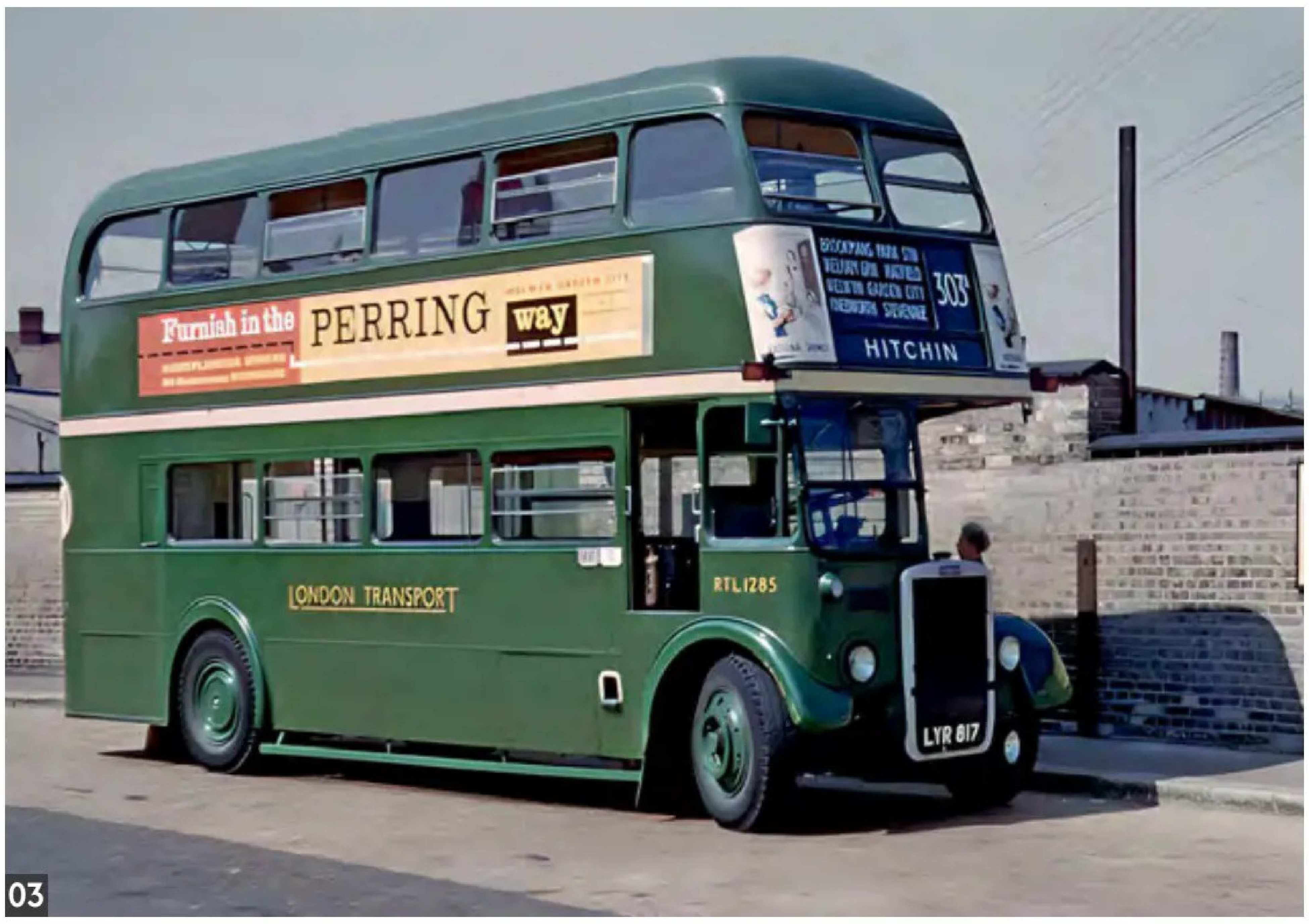
Fast-forward several decades, and despite my ongoing fascination with buses and coaches, I found myself in the banking world — a far cry from my childhood dreams of the open road.

During this time I embraced my hobby and passion for buses with magazines, membership of Cobham Bus Museum, and taking every opportunity to 'spot and photograph whilst working variously in Northwood, Harrow, Colindale, in the office block built on the former Trolleybus depot, Finchley Road, Epsom, Wimbledon, and the City of London. One peripatetic role required me to visit units within the complete geographical area of London Transport/Country.

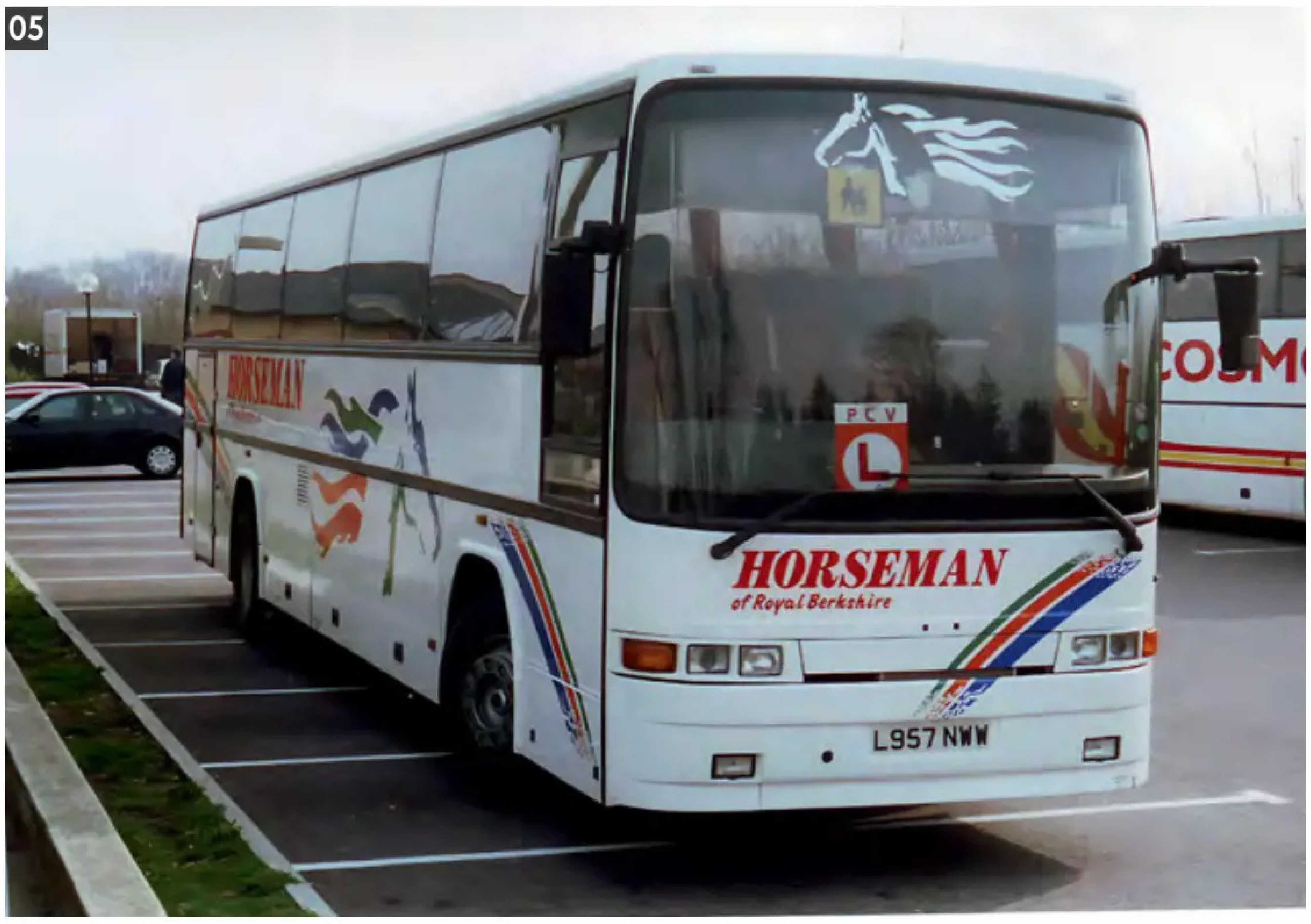
Wherever possible, I would travel by bus, hoping to see never-before-viewed routes and buses, for example, the BT class Bristol VRT vehicles on the 370 in Grays.

On taking up a new role in Epsom, we moved to the village of Fetcham, with a bonus of having to pass Leatherhead garage (LH) at least twice a day for 13 years, yet another spotter's joy, with red, green, and yellow buses. Bournemouth Daimler Fleetlines on hire with London single- and double-deckers aplenty. It would be quite wrong for me to try to explain anything more about the garage and vehicles when there is the excellent book written by Rod Lucas, Shades of Green and Red. Unbeknown to me then, I must have travelled with Rod many times on my way to and from Epsom.

Derby week meant extended lunch hours to view 'extras' on the 406F from far and away, including Stevenage (SV), Swanley (SJ), East Grinstead (EG), and Northfleet (NF).



04
City Sightseeing



03 RTL1285 at New Barnet Station, the terminus of Route 303/A. **CLIFF ESSEX**

04 Former ERM (Extended Routemaster)-in City Sightseeing colours en route from Lothian Buses Edinburgh to Purfleet. Knowing that I was to drive this I dressed accordingly.

05 An ex-Wallace Arnold Volvo B10M with Jonckheere coachwork resting at a Little Chef during my training. This was the vehicle in which I took my test and one of 12 identical coaches purchased just prior to my joining the company.

However, like many 'jobs for life', my banking career came to an abrupt end after 35 years, at the age of 51. I knew that a new chapter was waiting, and it didn't take long to figure out what that would be.

Not wanting to return to the predictable daily grind, I decided to take a leap and train for my Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) licence. With a bit of luck, I knocked on the door of Horseman Coaches in Reading and, a few weeks later, found myself behind the wheel of a Volvo B10M with Jonckheere bodywork, once part of the Wallace Arnold fleet. Shortly after, I passed my test and became a qualified driver.

For several years, I drove a variety of coaches purchased by Keith Horseman, ranging from a DAF/Van Hool with a splitter gearbox to a 57-seat MAN-engined coach with Marcopolo bodywork. Among my favourites was a 39-seat Berkhof-bodied Dennis Javelin 320.

ENSIGNBUS: A NEW ADVENTURE BEGINS

Throughout my career, I continued to read Buses Illustrated/BUSES and society publications, staying engaged with the bus community. It was during an overseas holiday, while browsing through the latest issue of the London Omnibus Traction Society (LOTS) magazine, that a small advert caught my eye and a golden opportunity presented itself. It was placed by Ross Newman of EnsignBus, and it read: 'You must like London buses as you are reading this magazine; do you have a PCV licence? Would you like to drive our Heritage Fleet?' You can guess what happened next. Within two weeks, I found myself in the cab of RT624, driving around the Purfleet Industrial Estate. Soon after, I was officially invited to join the EnsignBus team, which began what would become a 20-year association with the company.

With this new opportunity, the ability to enjoy London Buses reached an entirely new level. I found it difficult to believe that I was, two weeks after my assessment, in the cab of RCL2220 on my first private hire, being part of a 25-vehicle heritage vehicle job, taking staff from a major bank from hotels in London to Olympia for its annual achievers' awards.

From weddings to special events, I drove countless historic vehicles for EnsignBus. The enjoyment of experiencing and driving many different former London Transport vehicles is easy to explain; they are wonderful vehicles. Duties, among other things, included wedding hires, park & ride for the former London Motor Show, rail replacement with former London vehicles, corporate event hires, Tube strike extras, bus rallies (including Cobham/LBM), Olympic Games private hires, RT75, The London War Tour, and, of course, the EnsignBus Running Day.

Weddings, in particular, were a regular feature, and it was always interesting to hear the reasons customers chose certain buses. For instance, I once drove RT3232, freshly painted in EnsignBus's blue and silver livery, because the colour matched the bridesmaids' dresses perfectly!

During the 2014 Olympic Games, the Russian sports brand hired three Routemasters, each adorned in different colours to represent athletes from Ukraine, Spain, and Russia.

During my early years with EnsignBus, the company also owned the City Sightseeing lead franchise and managed, amongst others, the Windsor Sightseeing Tour. Living in Reading, it was easy for me at times to provide

06 Before and during a day's work on 'Tube strike extras' EnsignBus depot Purfleet and Blackwall Docklands Light Railway Station.

07 One of the rare MCW Metroliner 400GT vehicles operating a rail replacement service and seen laying over in Barking during a lunch break.

08 Cravens-bodied RT1499 rests alongside the Thames at Henley, and not on route 248, whilst the hirer with his family and friends enjoy what the very famous area has to offer.

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Ensignbus
Ensignbus

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lunchtime, sickness, and holiday cover, thus providing a further opportunity to drive ex-London vehicles.

One memorable loan from the City Sightseeing Bath fleet was an Ayats-bodied Volvo B7, which I drove for the Lord Mayor of London's annual parade, a unique experience, to say the least!

WEDDINGS, PARADES, AND POLICE ENCOUNTERS

Many of my most memorable drives came from transporting wedding guests to and from venues, including Islington Town Hall and Marylebone Registry Office, in iconic buses like RCL2220, RMA58, and even Southdown's Leyland TS7 DUF 179.

One wedding involved a good friend of the Newman family, where ER882, RM54, and RMC1485 were all chosen to shuttle guests from hotels to the church and the reception.

Of course, not all moments were calm and controlled. While on a private hire with RT624, I found myself at Runnymede, waiting to enter a car park to drop off a client. As I began moving the bus across the road, I mistakenly believed two police outriders had waved me across. In reality, I had stopped none other than the late Queen Elizabeth II on her way to Ascot! I can only imagine her remarking to Prince Philip: 'Isn't that the last RT in London Transport service?'

THE CLASSIC LONDON BUS SOCIETY AND MORE ADVENTURES

Because of a shared interest Trevor Hawes and I became friends and, along with Peter Brown, we set up the Classic London Bus Society with the purpose of hiring Heritage vehicles from EnsignBus, Blue Triangle (now London Bus Company), societies, and museums.

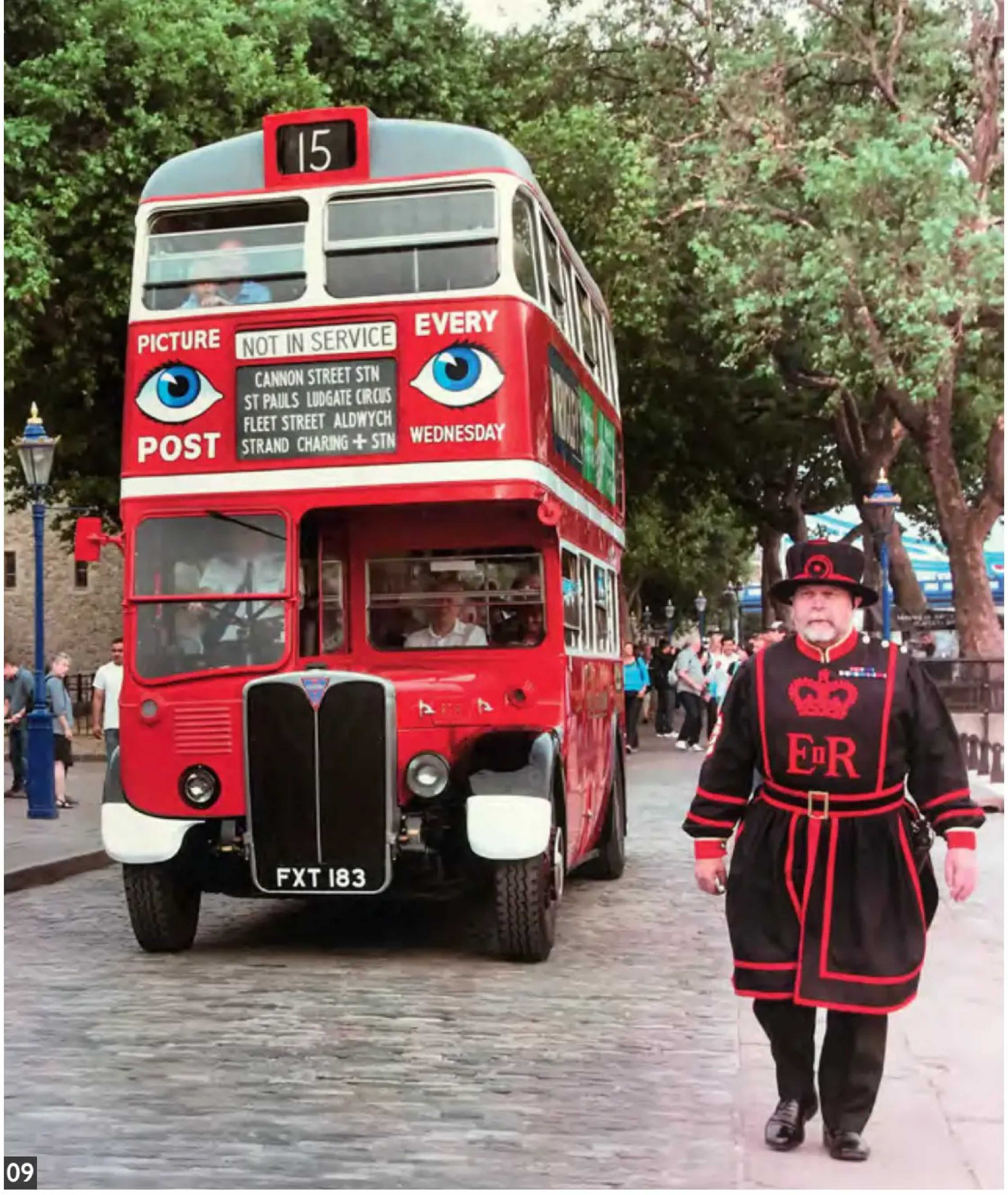
Trips would feature the routes that vehicles would have operated on in London Transport service. One notable venture was a Wartime Tour of London, operated by Evans Evans, which required a vintage bus to criss-cross the City of London and West End, passing historically significant buildings and sites from World War 2.

RAIL REPLACEMENT AND BEYOND

Rail replacement services were another staple of my time with EnsignBus, especially during London Underground strikes. There was something surreal about driving an RT past the Bank of England, where I had worked during my banking days.

One of my favourite driving experiences was collecting and delivering secondhand buses for EnsignBus. I have fond memories of collecting RM371 from Lothian Buses in Edinburgh, just one of seven Routemasters I was fortunate enough to drive home.

From the many memorable and enjoyable experiences that I have had, one particular trip stands out. When RT8 was officially launched, following the extensive magnificent restoration, at the Tower of London, the directors of EnsignBus asked if I would like to drive the bus back to Purfleet. A difficult question and took me less than five seconds to say yes!



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WEDDING SPECIAL
CONGRATULATIONS!
KYY 961

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09 What has to be one of my all-time favourite pictures, sees a lucky me returning RT8 to Purfleet exiting the Tower of London grounds. This was the occasion of the official launch to family, friends and industry journalists following an extensive restoration by the excellent team at EnsignBus. It so happens that the Beefeater leading the way is a Bus Enthusiast! **PETER ZABEK**

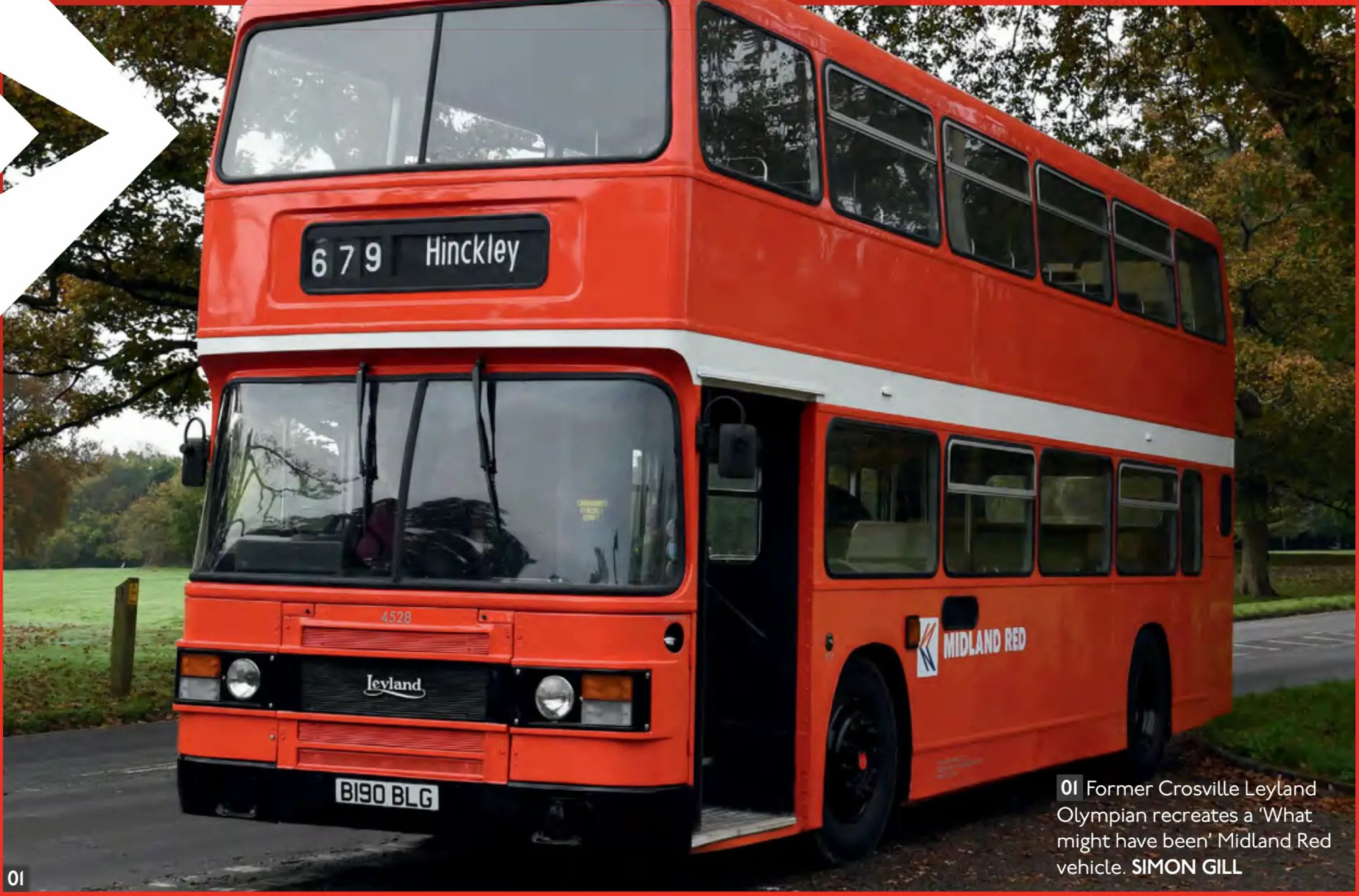
10 RT3232 in the traditional 'Blue and Silver' livery associated with the company awaits the bride and the bridesmaids, on the former's special day. The dresses that the bridesmaids wore blended in well with the bus — identical colours!

11 RT4421, RT1431, RT1 and STL2377 line up at Liverpool Station awaiting to transport guests to the Czech Embassy following a trip on 'The Winton Train' a commemorative journey from the Czech Republic to Great Britain recognizing the efforts of Sir Nicholas Winton for his part in saving refugee children leading up to outbreak of World War 2.

A LIFELONG PASSION

As I reflect on my 65-year love for buses and coaches, I'm grateful for the adventures, the people I've met, and the countless journeys, both literal and figurative that this passion has taken me on. From my early days as a bus-spotting child in Watford to transporting the elite athletes of the London Marathon, I've had experiences I could never have imagined. And through it all, one thing remains clear: my passion for buses continues to drive me forward.

I would like to thank all the photographers who have agreed for their work to be included in this feature.



01 Former Crosville Leyland Olympian recreates a 'What might have been' Midland Red vehicle. **SIMON GILL**

A Personal Recreation

SIMON GILL catches up with Karl Brailsford following the launch of his newly repainted former Crosville Leyland Olympian, B190 BLG, which was unveiled at the Transport Museum Wythall during the Midland Red 120 event on 6 October 2024.

Authenticity and vehicle liveries can be a very emotive subject. Some think that every preserved bus and coach should be restored back to its original condition even if the vehicle concerned carried various liveries throughout its life.
A 'fictitious' livery that the type of vehicle never carried in service with the operator can be even more controversial. However, buses are about people as well as the vehicles themselves and the services they operated, so recreating 'what might have been' for a very good reason deserves recognition and praise.

COALVILLE GARAGE

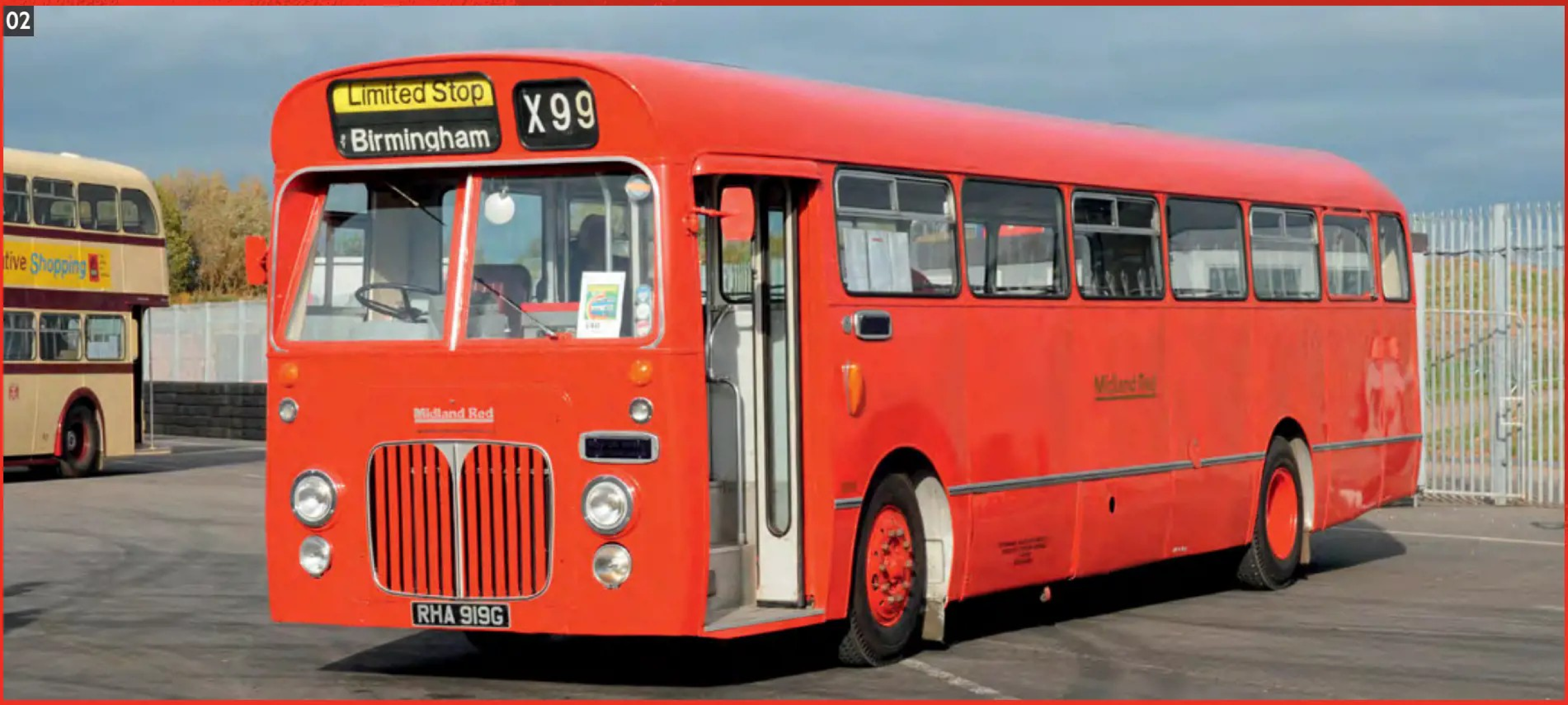
Karl Brailsford's fascination with Midland Red began in 1972 when, at the age six, he spent every minute he could with his father, Rod, who was employed as a driver at the company's Coalville garage. When not at school Karl would travel around with his father and even help him refuel the bus and cash up at the end of the day. He was in and out of the garage all the time and was well known to the staff and managers who treated him as one of their own. The garage had an active social club with regular day trips by bus to steam railways which the staff, including Karl's family, enjoyed. This was, of course, during the National Bus Company's (NBC) poppy red era so it was the livery he grew up with and liked so much.

Towards the end of 1979 Colin May joined his father as a driver at Coalville and he and Rod became good friends. Sadly, this friendship was not to last long as Rod died in 1982. Karl then began travelling around with Colin, even joining him for a while when he moved into road haulage. They lost touch with one another later that year when Karl obtained employment in the railway industry where he had a long career as a train driver.

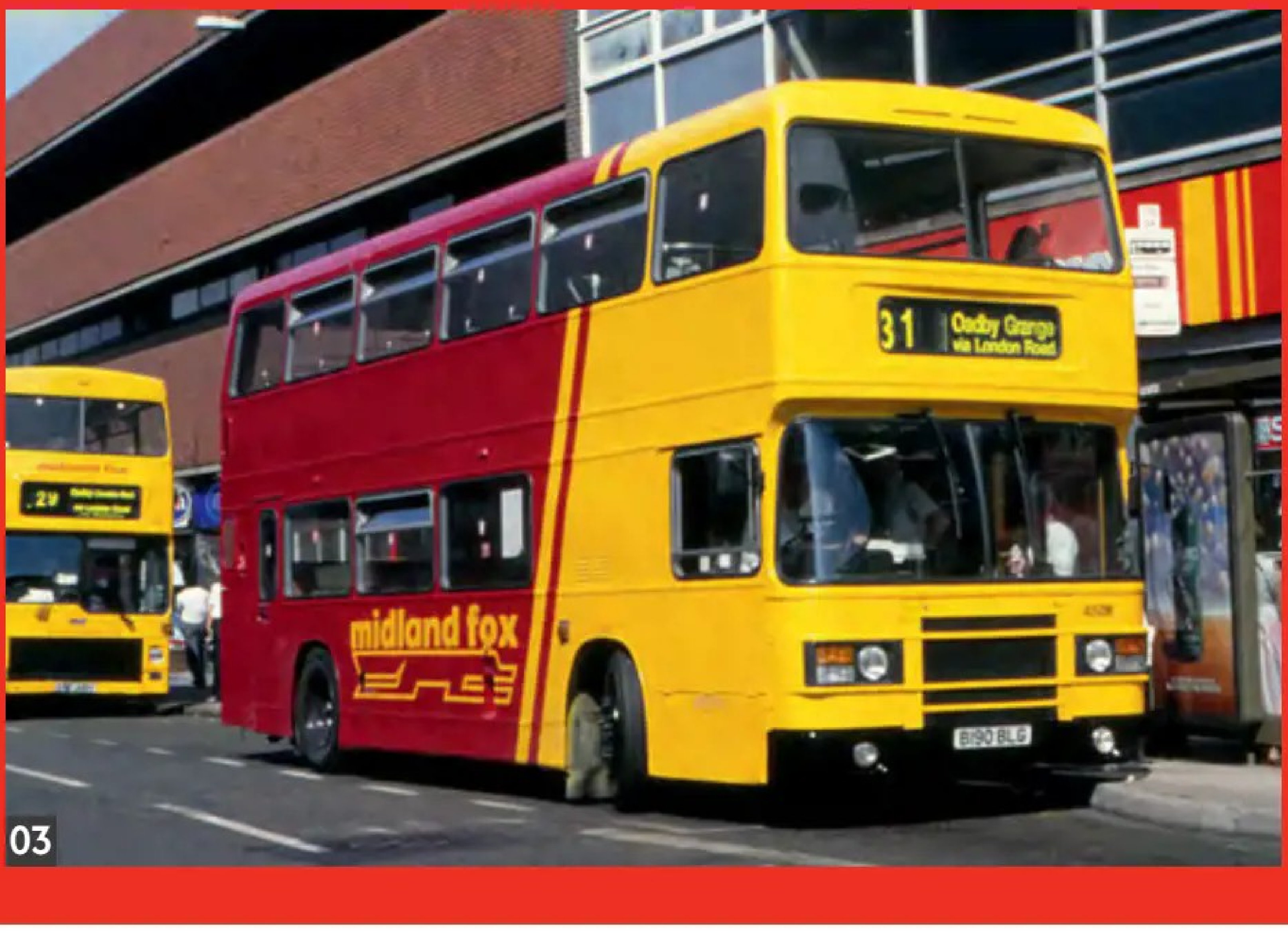
Following a gap of nearly 40 years Karl met Colin once again during a visit to BusFest at Gaydon and their friendship was rekindled. They already had much in common and it was not long before Karl bought a half share, with Colin, in former Midland Red No 5919 (RHA 919G) a 1968 BMMO S23 as it represents one of two similar buses (Nos 5930 & 5967) based at Coalville during the early-1970s.

B190 BLG

Having become involved in bus preservation and meeting more like-minded people through the Leicester Transport Heritage Trust (LTHT), Karl was keen to acquire his own bus; preferably one with a connection to Coalville garage. Trevor Follows was aware that two former Crosville and Midland Fox/



02 The bus that started Karl Brailsford's interest in bus preservation that he now jointly owns with Colin May is former Midland Red 5919 (RHA 919G) a 1968 BMMO S23 seen at Showbus 2018. **SIMON GILL**



03 Former Crosville Leyland Olympian B190 BLG became Midland Fox 4528 and is seen here smartly turned out in Belgrave Gate, Leicester on 22 July 1994 operating service 31 to Oadby Grange. **TREVOR FOLLOWS**

00 SPECIAL SERVICE
SHUTTLE BUS
75 Special

04 The official handover of Confidence 70 (B190 BLG) took place during the Leicester Transport Heritage Trust rally at Quorn and Woodhouse station on 9 October 2021. Proprietor Ken Williams is seen in the centre shaking hands with new owner Karl Brailsford on the right whilst Colin May looks on. **TREVOR FOLLOWS**

Arriva Leyland Olympians in the fleet of Confidence Bus and Coach Hire, Leicester had previously been based at Coalville and were likely to be coming up for sale, so he spoke to proprietor, Ken Williams, to make him aware of Karl's interest.

On 21 September 2021 a deal was done and Karl became the proud owner of former Crosville DOG190 (B190 BLG) a Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R with standard Eastern Coach Works (ECW) 77-seat body. Delivered to Crosville on 22 January 1985 it was registered and entered service the following month at Wrexham garage. It remained there when the company was split in two on 10 August 1986 joining Crosville Wales which officially started operations that day. It gained Crosville Wales green and white livery with 'Chester Link – The Best Way From A to Dee' branding for use on service 1 between Wrexham and Chester. By August 1989 it was working out of Llandudno Junction garage before being withdrawn and sold to Midland Fox in May 1990.

The Olympian entered service at Leicester, Southgate Street garage with fleet number 4528 moving to Thurmaston in May 1996, then Wigston in April 1998. Shortly after the formation of Arriva Fox County it moved to Stamford in October 2000 before returning to Thurmaston by April 2004. Its final move was to Coalville garage in April 2006 for a few months before sale to Ensign (dealer) in October 2006. It returned to Leicestershire in December 2006 when it was sold to C&N Travel of Barrow-upon-Soar to operate school services. Unfortunately, C&N Travel ceased operations on 29 February 2008 following the death of the founder in December 2007 and the bus was acquired by Confidence in March 2008 and given fleet No 70.

GREAT PURCHASE

When Karl acquired B190 BLG it was in very good condition mechanically as it had only recently passed a Class 6 MoT. The purchase included maintenance records so there was evidence of all the work that had been carried out including a top-end engine rebuild by Welham Group of Leicester.

Karl initially decided to rally his Olympian in Confidence colours whilst he considered which livery to apply. Disaster nearly struck when, whilst taking a break from running a free bus service in Leicestershire, Karl suddenly noticed smoke rising from the offside rear lower deck. A rapid investigation revealed flames were just beginning to take hold but luckily these were quickly extinguished, and

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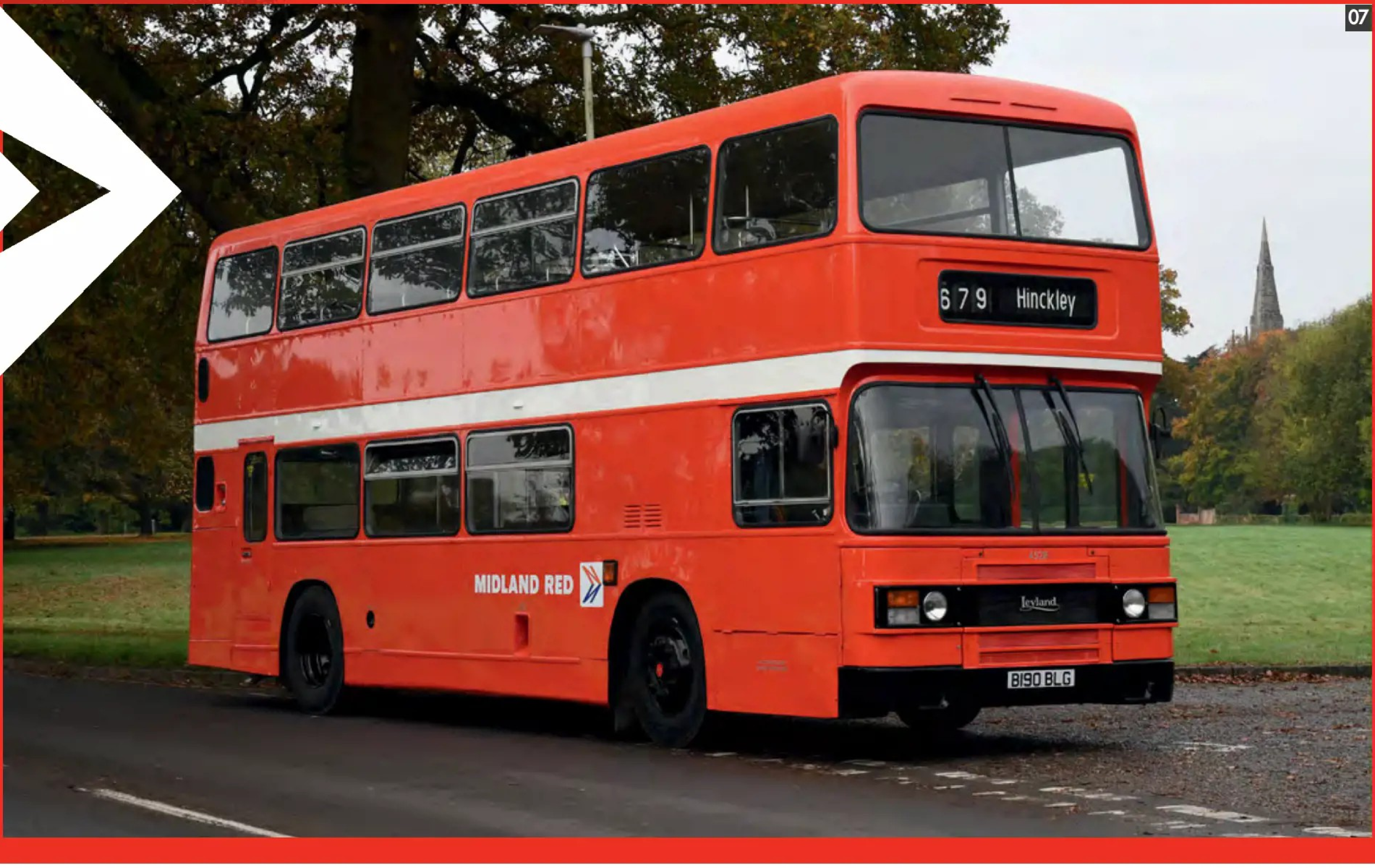
05 Mick Gamble stands on a carefully positioned flatbed trailer to sand down upper deck panels on 11 April 2024. **KARL BRAILSFORD**

06 B190 BLG is almost ready for painting at Shirley's Transport, Stoke-on-Trent in August 2024. **KARL BRAILSFORD**

07 The Olympian looks splendid as it poses in Market Bosworth recreating a service to Hinckley. **SIMON GILL**



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a potential deadly fire was averted. Diagnosis revealed some electrical wiring had shorted and a partial rewiring was carried out by electrical guru Leon McKenzie and Rob Allen of Confidence.

Outside storage soon began to take its toll on the paintwork which began to deteriorate so it was time to start work on preparing the bodywork for a well-deserved repaint Mick Gamble, who had also known Karl's father at Coalville garage, offered to help put his wealth of knowledge and experience to work. With assistance from Colin May they began sanding down the panels and, as many rivets had worked loose, they were all replaced which straightened the panels up nicely. They lost count of how many rivets were used, not to mention the broken drill bits, rivet guns and clogged sandpaper! The back-breaking process took over a year to complete, but was worth all the effort as a good final paint finish depends on the preparation which should not be skimped.

LIVERY

Following a recommendation from Steve Riley, Karl approached Shirley's Transport of Stoke-on-Trent which agreed to undertake the repaint. Further preparation by Shirley's, together with painting, took another 100 hours, but Karl was delighted with the result.

B190 BLG has reverted to its former Midland Fox fleet number 4528, but the livery is unique as NBC poppy red has been applied with a single white band and plain Midland Red fleet name. No Leyland Olympians were acquired by Midland Red before it was split into six companies on 6 September 1981 as it preferred to purchase Leyland National saloons, so this livery and fleet name never appeared on this type of bus at the time.

Following the split three companies took delivery of Olympians with Midland Red North the first to acquire 13 in 1983/84, which carried a revised poppy red livery with prominent local identity names on a coloured band. Midland Red East/Midland Fox took 14 around the same period in their new dark red livery with a yellow front. Midland Red South was the only company to acquire Olympians in poppy red with a white band which was applied to ten of the 17 acquired new. All had Midland Red South fleet names and carried fleetnumbers 903-9 (A543-9 HAC) and 910-2 (B910-2 ODU). It should be noted that the first two, 901/2, arrived in all-over advertisement liveries.

The plain Midland Red fleet name on 4528 reflects the fact that Midland Red East never included 'East' as part of its fleet name as local

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08 Cab details showing driver's controls are readily to hand.
SIMON GILL

09 Tidy lower-deck 'in service' condition which Karl intends to deep clean next year.
SIMON GILL

10 Most upper-deck seats still have the rubber seat tops added for use on school bus services. These will shortly be removed prior to a deep clean.
SIMON GILL

11 A particularly nice personal touch is Karl's father Rod's Midland Red jacket hanging up behind the driver's seat.
SIMON GILL

12 The engine cover has the correct 'Please let buses pull out' sign on the back.
SIMON GILL

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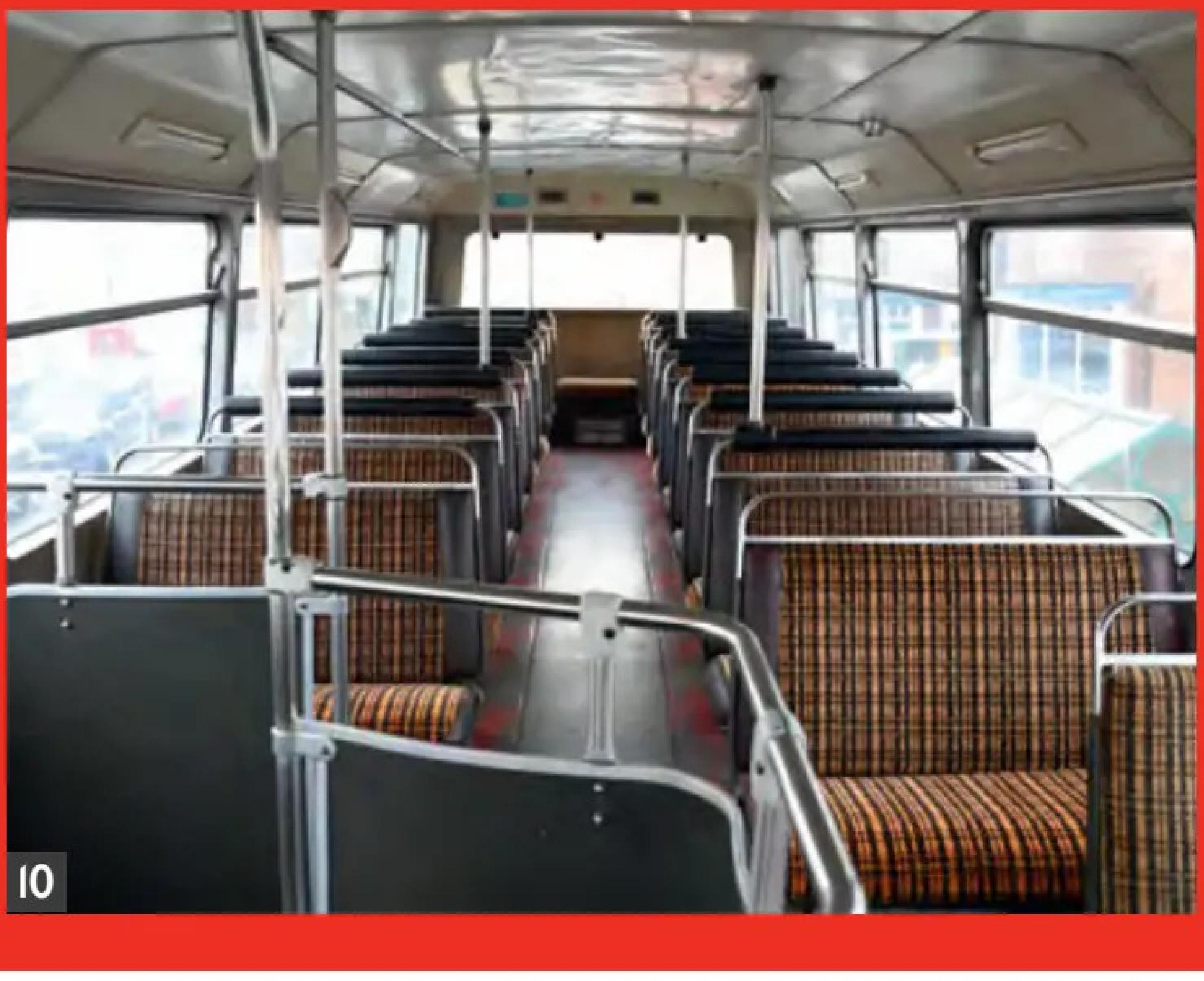
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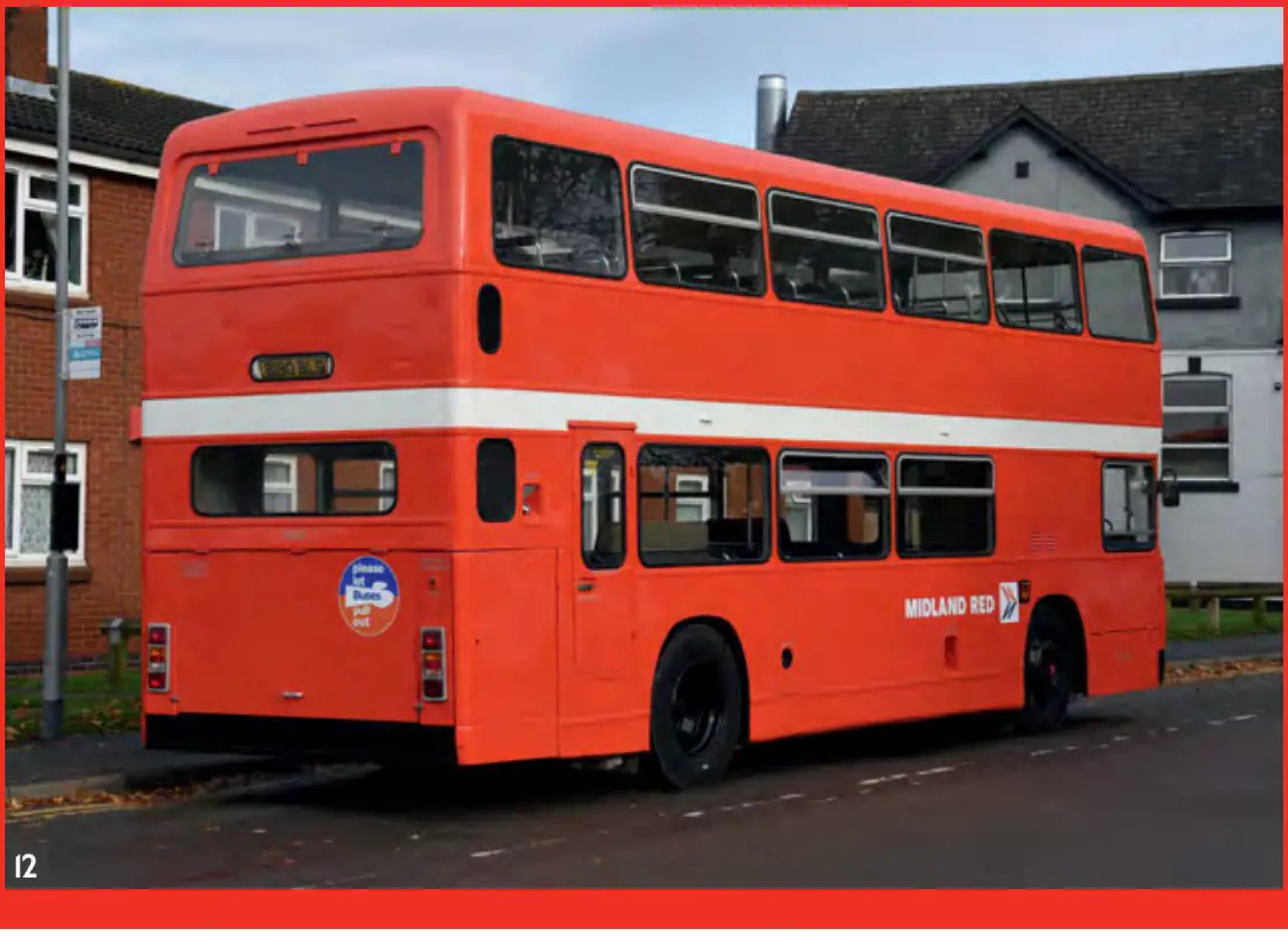
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management considered it meaningless. No 4528's livery therefore represents the era that Karl remembers and has recreated especially as 2025 is a very special year in Coalville for his beloved bus company.

COALVILLE CENTENARY

The Midland Red garage in Ashby Road, Coalville opened on 6 December 1925 and passed to Midland Red East on 6 September 1981. Relaunched under the name Midland Fox on 15 January 1984, the garage was included in the sale to Drawlane Transport Group on 4 September 1989; the Group being split up in November 1992 to form British Bus. This in turn passed to the Cowie Group in August 1996 and renamed Arriva Fox County in April 1998 The premises finally closed on 26 March 2011 and is now occupied by a car dealer.

To celebrate the centenary of the garage LTHT is organising a Midland Red themed event at Snibston Colliery Park, Coalville on Sunday 7 September 2025. It is hoped that many former Midland Red vehicles will attend so mark the date in your diary and look out for further details. Summer 2025 will see No 4528 decorated with between-deck advertisements to promote the event.

LASTLY

With the exterior of 4528 completed attention will now turn to the interior which, apart from removing the rubber tops to the lower deck seats added for school bus work, remains in 'in service' condition. A deep clean of both decks will be undertaken and the floors painted. In the meantime, Karl is enjoying taking 4528 to events as he says it is superb to drive with excellent steering and plenty of power helped by the high-speed differential. He has spoken to several former Midland Fox drivers who all say it was the best Leyland Olympian in the fleet. It may eventually be repainted in Midland Fox livery to join LTHT-owned former Midland Red East/Fox Leyland Olympian 4502 (A502 EJF) currently undergoing restoration.

In addition to those already mentioned Karl would like to thank his wife, Julie together with Colin and Angie May and Mick and Sally Gamble for their help and support which he considers a collective effort. Also, Ken Williams for his help when he acquired 4528, Richard Worman and Trevor Follows for their help and advice and Lee Hobson of Decal Central for applying the vinyls at Wythall the day before the Midland Red 120 event. Finally, to the team at the Transport Museum Wythall for allowing 4528 to be unveiled at its 120 event on 6 October where it proved very popular.

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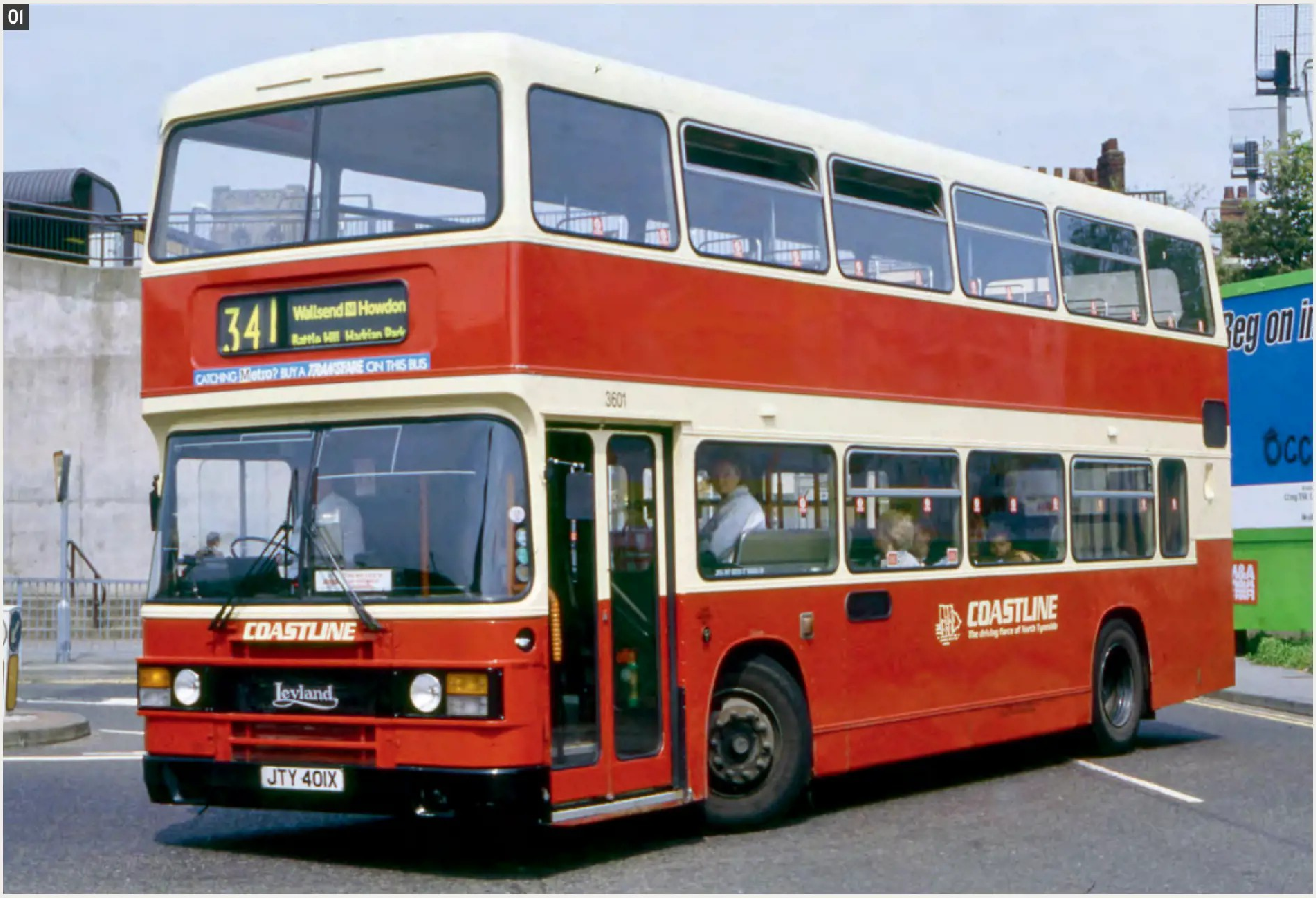
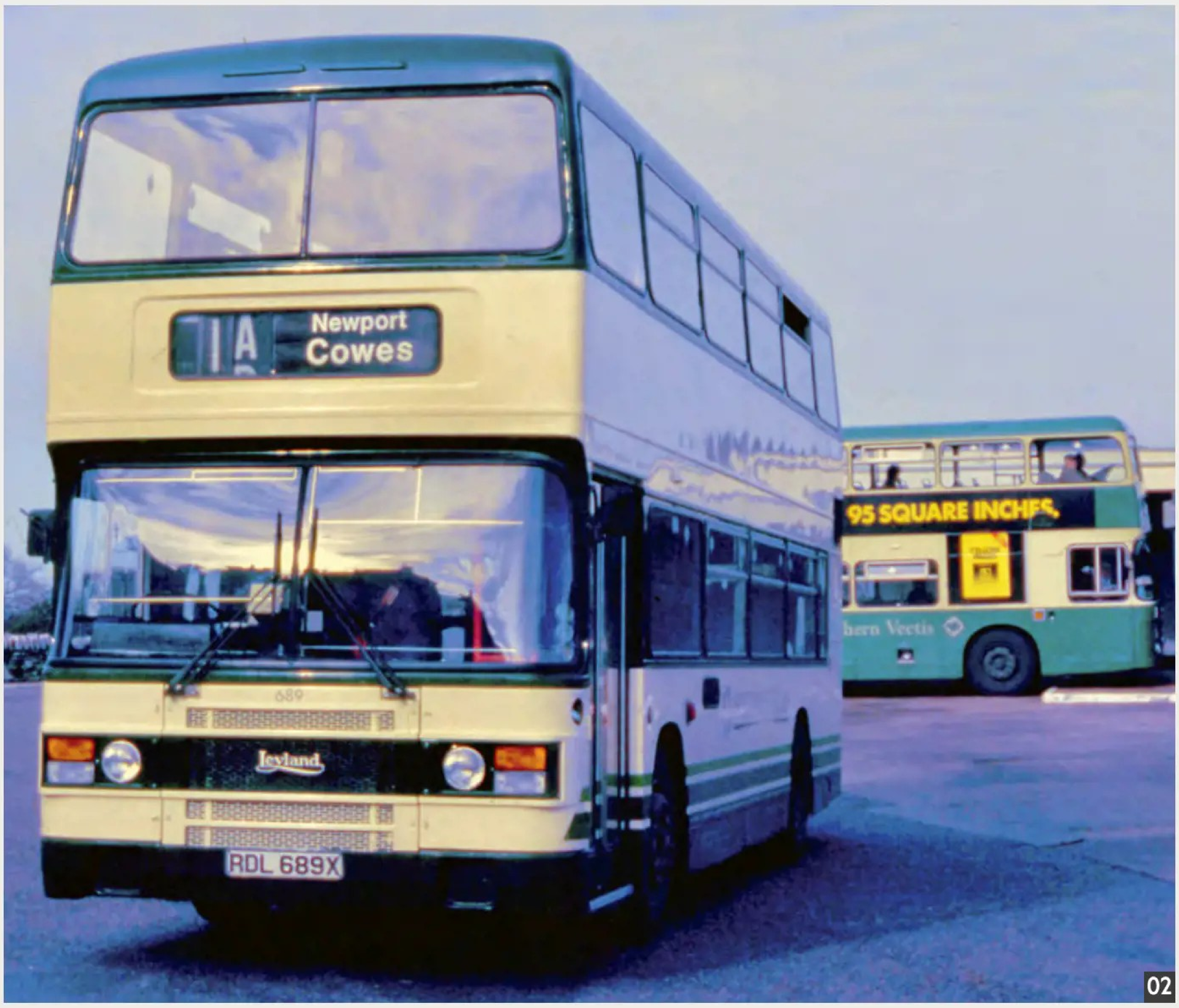


The early Olympians



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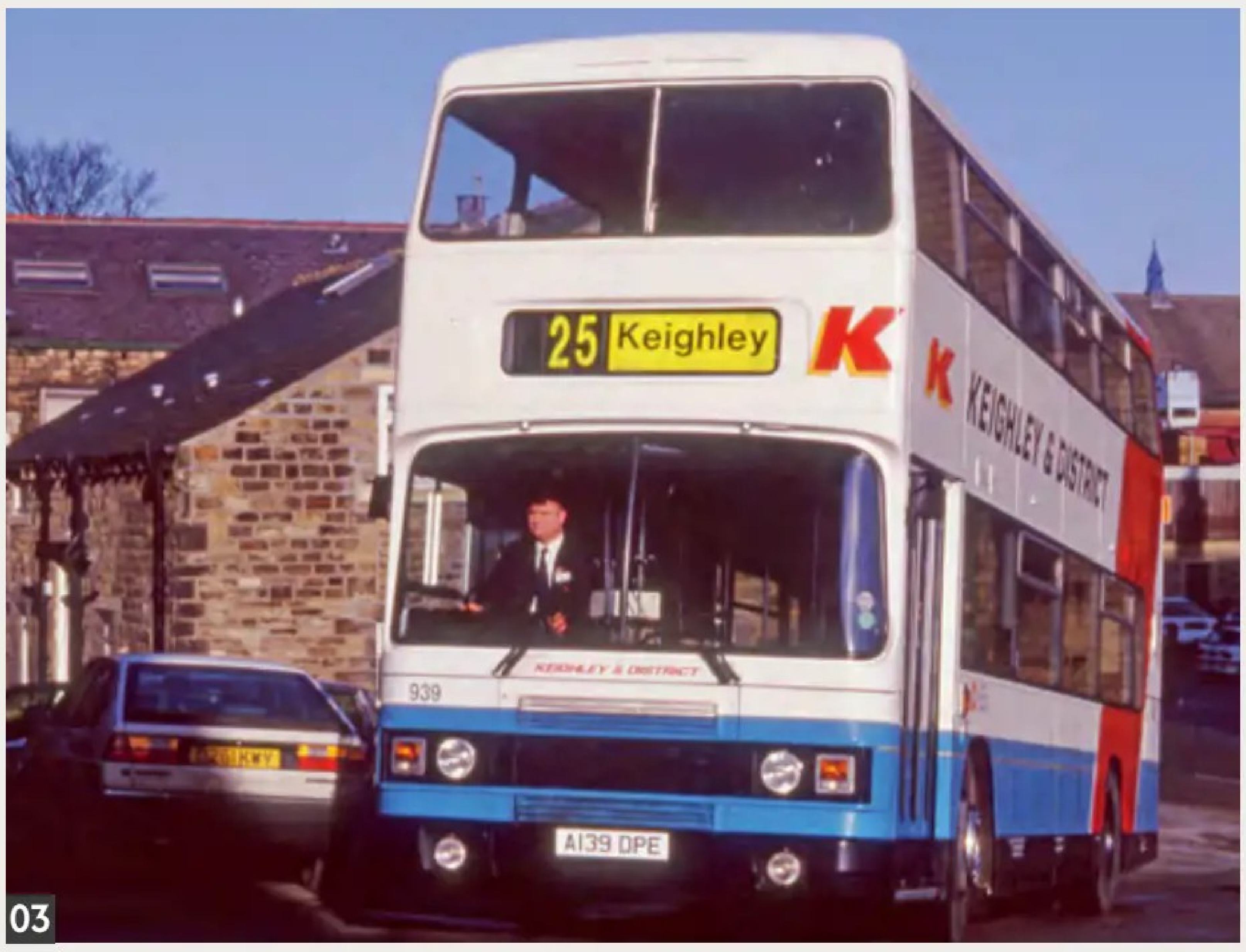
Leyland introduced the Olympian in 1981 as a broad-brush replacement for the Leyland Atlantean, Leyland Fleetline and Bristol VRT and as a body-on-chassis alternative to the Leyland Titan. It proved to be a major success with almost all NBC subsidiaries taking the newcomer into their fleets. Most of the NBC intake had ECW bodywork, but some received Roe bodies. Take a look at these . . .

01 Amongst the early recipients of the Leyland Olympian was Northern General which took 90. Amongst them was 1981-delivery 3601 (JTY 401X), seen here in Coastline livery. No 3601 later passed to East Yorkshire for its Scarborough & District operation.

02 At the other end of the country we find Southern Vectis 689 (RDL 689X), which had been new in 1982. It later saw service as a school bus with London Borough of Redbridge and APT Contracts.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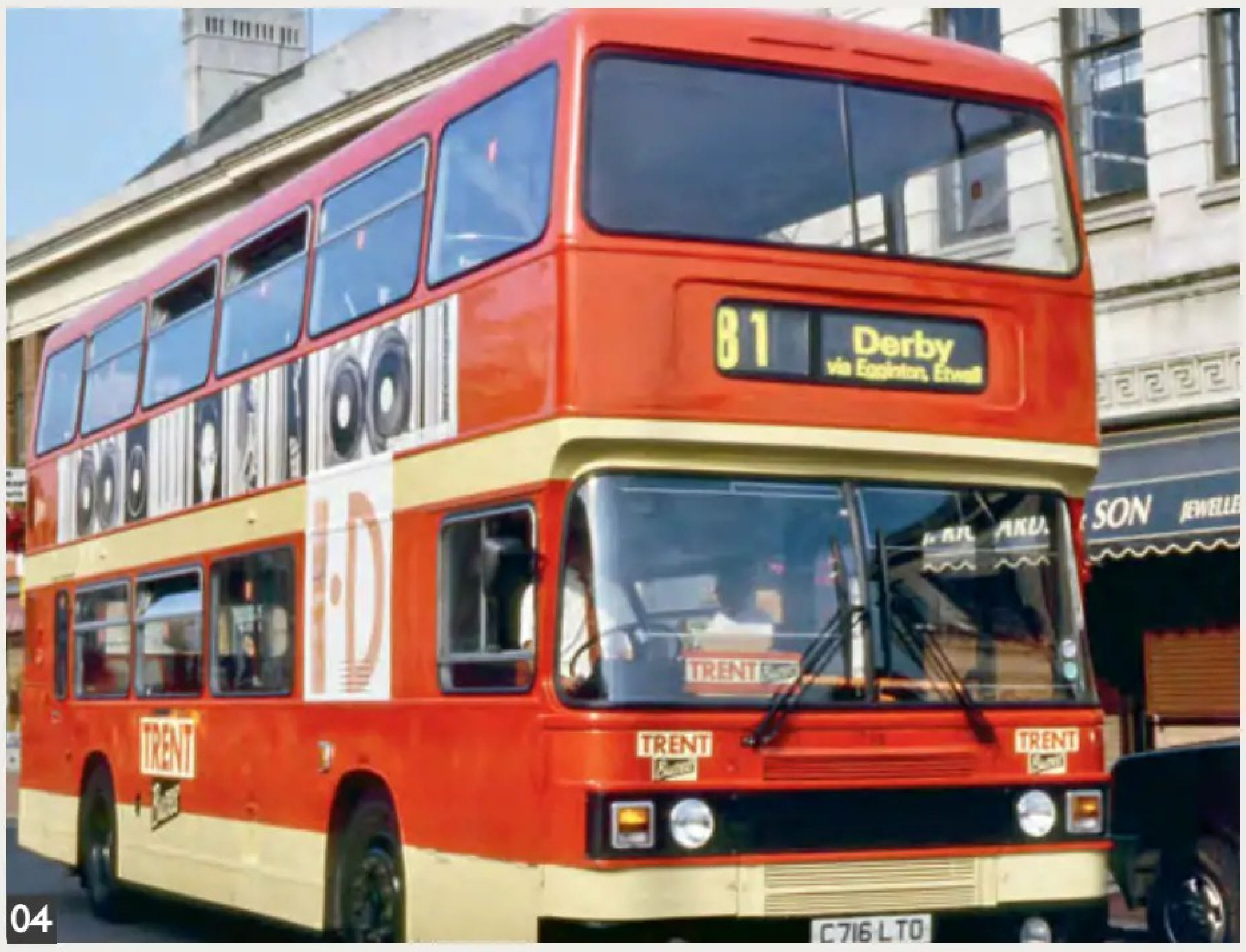
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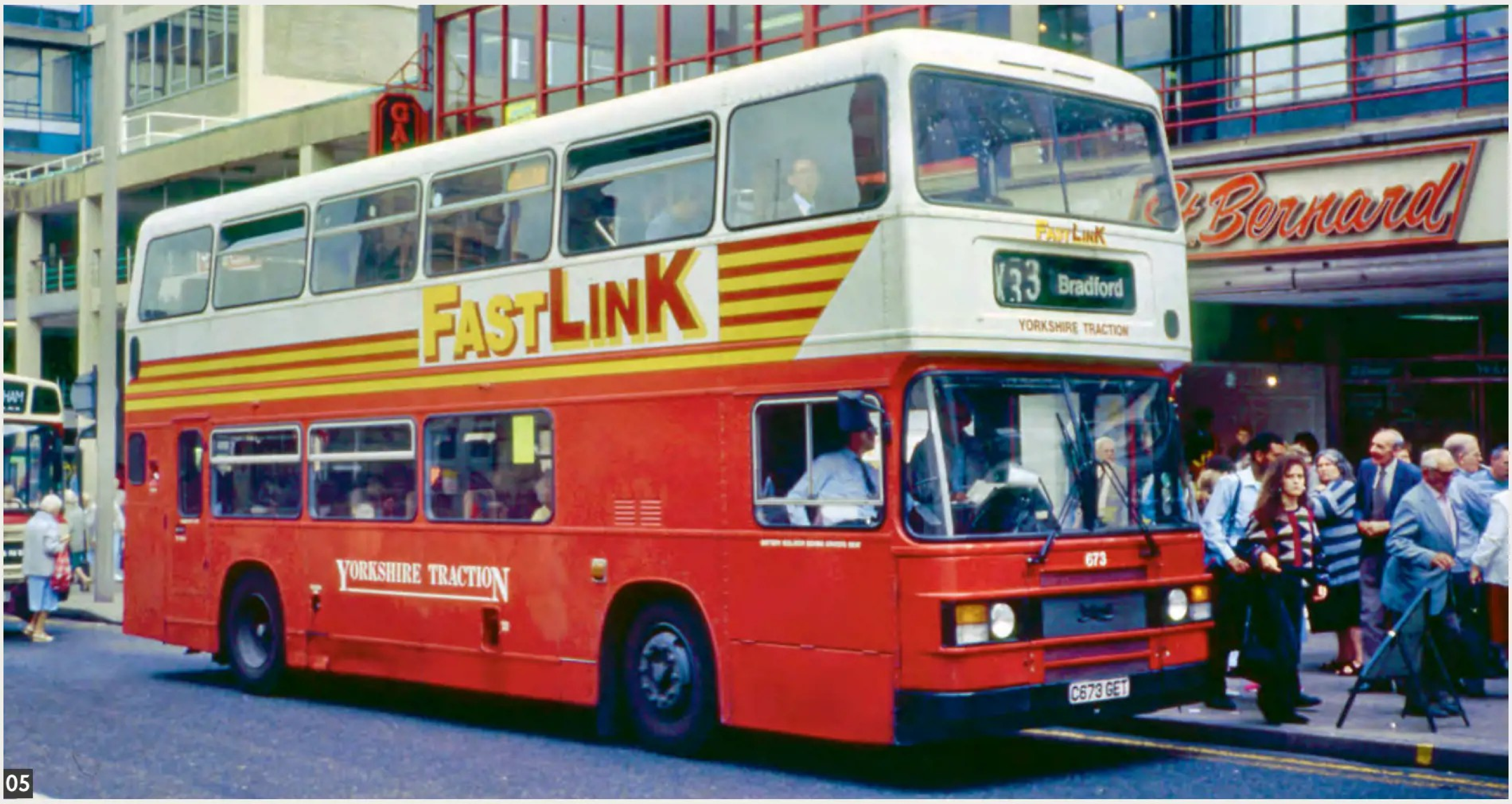
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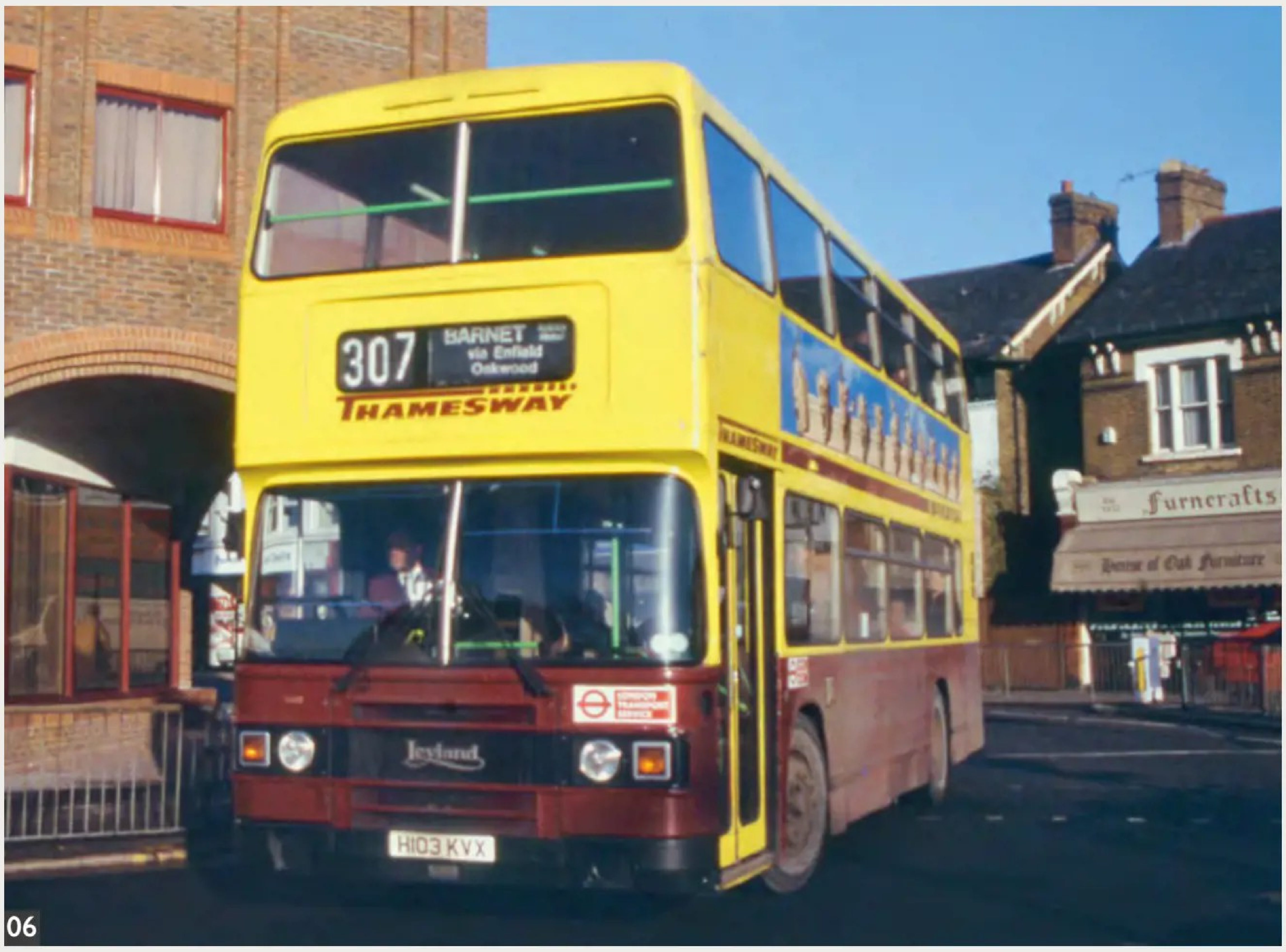
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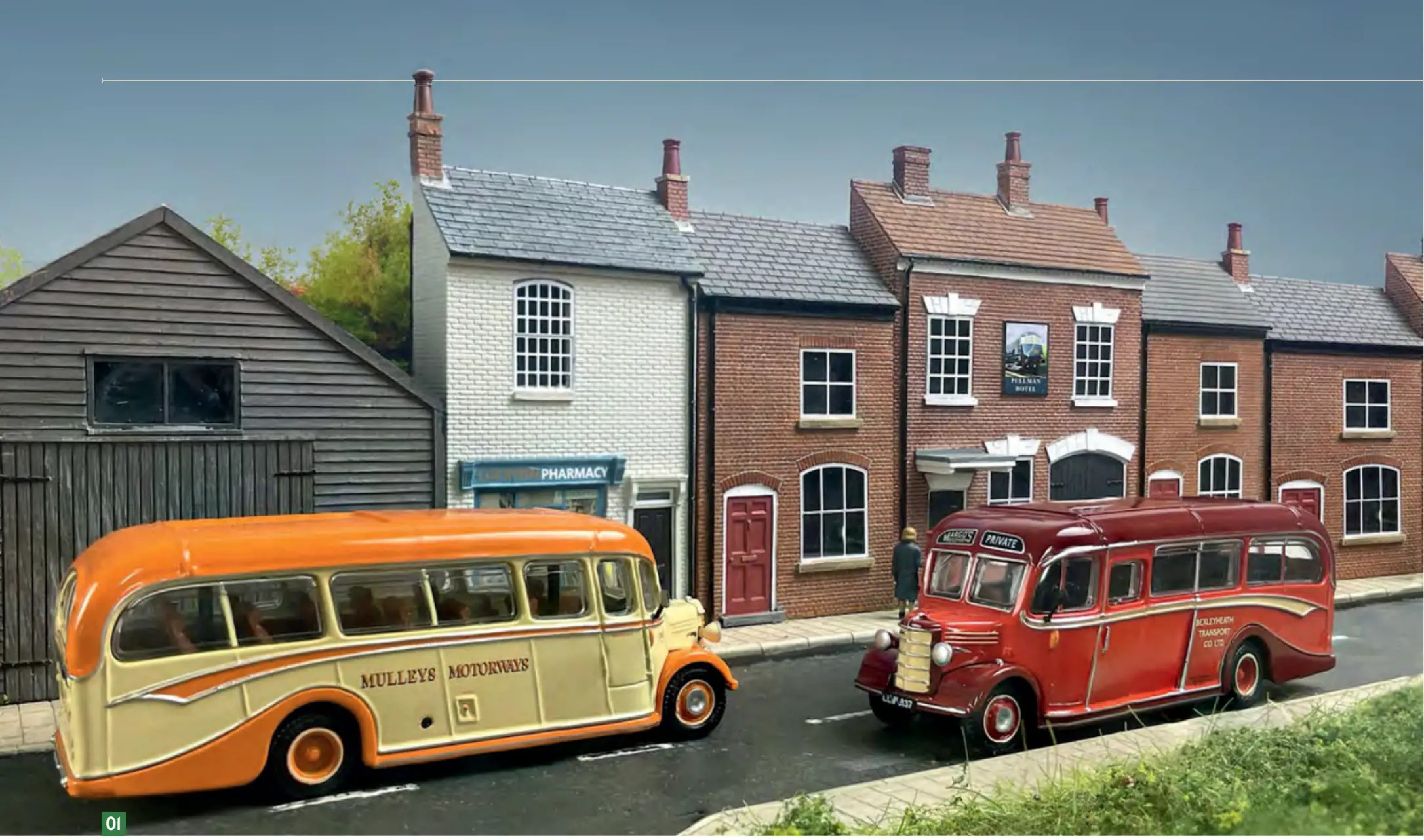
03 Roe-bodied examples were recognisable by the windscreen's curved top, (the ECW version was straight). Seen here is Keighley & District 978 (A139 DPE), which was new to London Country in 1983, later serving with the AJS Group Sovereign Bus & Coach and arriving in Keighley in 1990. The bus was returned in 1992.

04 Trent was a relatively small user of the early Leyland Olympian with just 24 taken into stock. No 716 (C716 LTO) was new in 1985. Seen here in August 1997, this bus was later transferred to the low-cost Notts & Derby before sale to Littles Travel, reregistered LHZ 6353.

05 Another Yorkshire example, in this case South, we find 673 (C673 GET) , new in 1985 to Yorkshire Traction, the last of 73 Leyland Olympian/ECWs purchased.

06 All-Leyland Olympian, Thamesway 1003 (H103 KVX), seen here in January 1995, this bus was later transferred within First Group to Eastern Counties.



01 A nice village scene with the Margo's and Mulleys examples, showing their beneficially-added detailing.

Bedford OB

JOHN G. LIDSTONE previews EFE Road's revamped Bedford OB.

To close the year which marked the 85th anniversary of the classic Bedford OB, in October, Bachmann's EFE Road took to social media to announce another re-release of a classic British casting. That release is the early postwar OB with its delightfully antique and curvaceous Duple Vista coachwork, which Exclusive First Editions first released in 1995 and which is now set to remain as part of the EFE Road catalogue.

Happy to say, this is another example of where the original EFE got it right: the overall look and feel of this really quite tiny OB model is just right, and now with better detailing, is about as good as it can now be in 1/76th scale and on a 30-year old casting.

The launch saw EFE Road Design Engineer Gary Boyd-Hope visit the Ipswich Transport Museum, which is home to Mulley's Motorways cream and orange-liveried OB PV 9371, one of the type selected to be modelled as one of its new re-releases.

As with the AEC Routemaster casting revamp which we covered last month, I'm delighted to say that this OB casting, too, has been given a step-up in detailing, together with more detailed livery applications and lettering and with painted interiors.

Retailing at an RRP of £41.95, the new-release OBs now feature rearview mirrors for the first time — a welcome improvement indeed: pre-release photos show this as well executed in good scale without looking 'chunky' as on some 1/76th scale models with this feature.

A touching aspect to this set of six new releases, is that each will feature a tribute to the co-founder of the original EFE with Frank Joyce — Brenda Joyce, who sadly passed away during 2024.

As well as for bus and coach model collectors, this OO-gauge casting is a gift to model railway fans, as it's the ideal 'little old coach' to feature on a 1950s country road or village scene, the liveries not being too place-specific and classic lines looking just grand in any such scene.

The Bedford OB is also a wise choice to model as it is the single best-represented classic coach in the preservation

Ref:	Identity:	Route:	Livery etc:
E20141	Margo's of Bexleyheath	LLW 837	Red with maroon roof and wings, with cream trim
E20142	Whiteway of Waunfawr	ACC 712	All-over white
E20143	Tours of Douglas, Isle of Man	1949 MN	Light and dark blue
E20144	Mulleys Motorways of Ixworth	PV 9371	Cream and orange
E20145	Stark's of Dunbar	SS 7486	Light green with dark green roof and wings, with cream trim
E20146	The Mountain Goat of Windermere	LRO 296	White with dark green wings and trim

Pictures by **EFE Road**

scene, by a wide margin, with around 180 known to still be with us out of the vast production of 12,693 such vehicles over 12 years from 1939 through to 1951, which included the wartime version, the OWB type and with a very creditable 5,493 exported at a time when rationing was still in force in the UK.

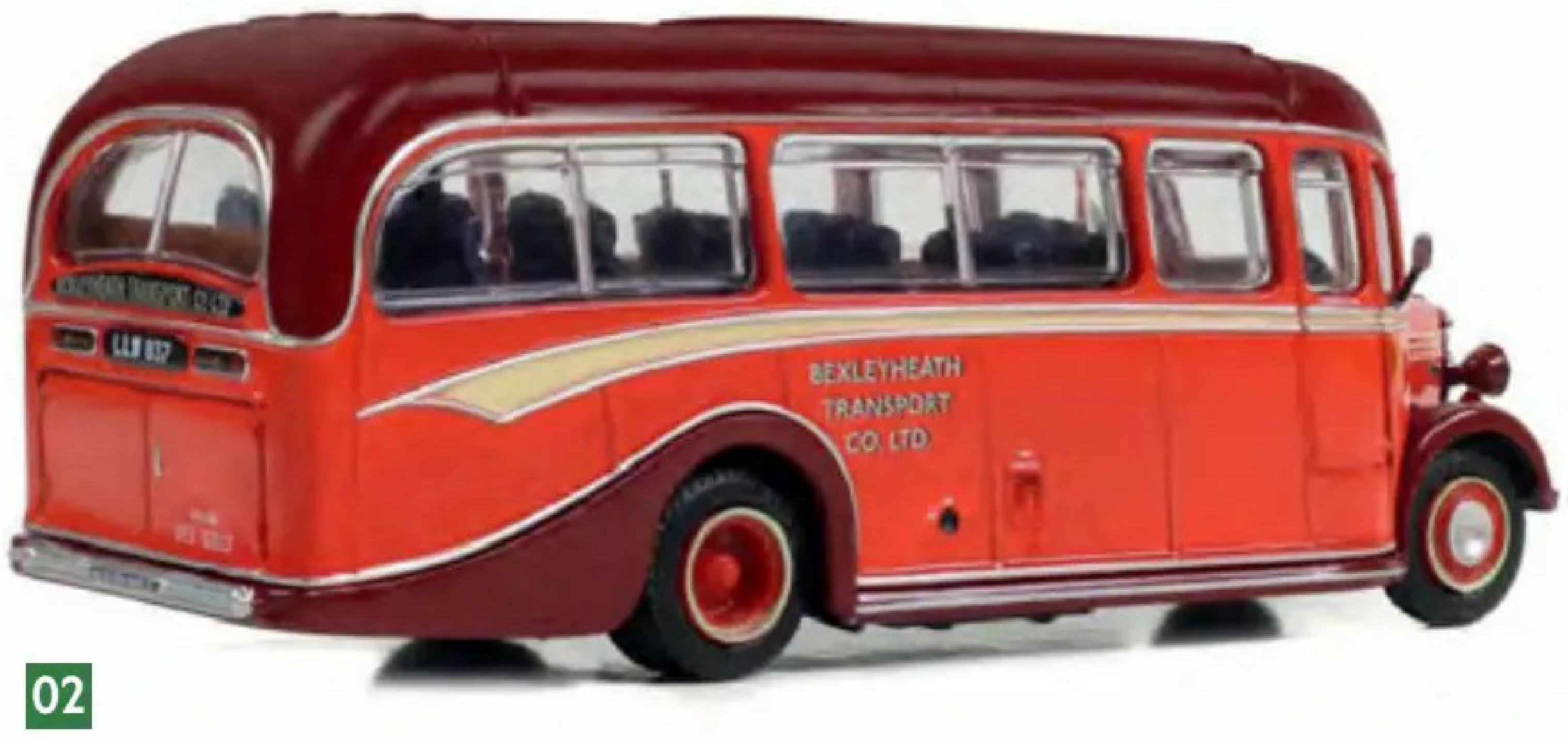
Bedford got its OB product just right for its time: a simple, no-nonsense, lightweight, economical, petrol-engined coach with (by today's standards) an incredibly small engine of just 28 brake horse power.

How sad it is, in 2024, as ADL Plaxton is about to 'suspend' coach production in 2025, as Britain's very last full-sized coach manufacturer, to think that in straightened times of the late 1940s and early 1950s, that the market for just this one product sold to the tune of 7,200 vehicles, all completely home-produced, whilst in 2025, there are likely to be no full-sized coaches produced in our country at all.

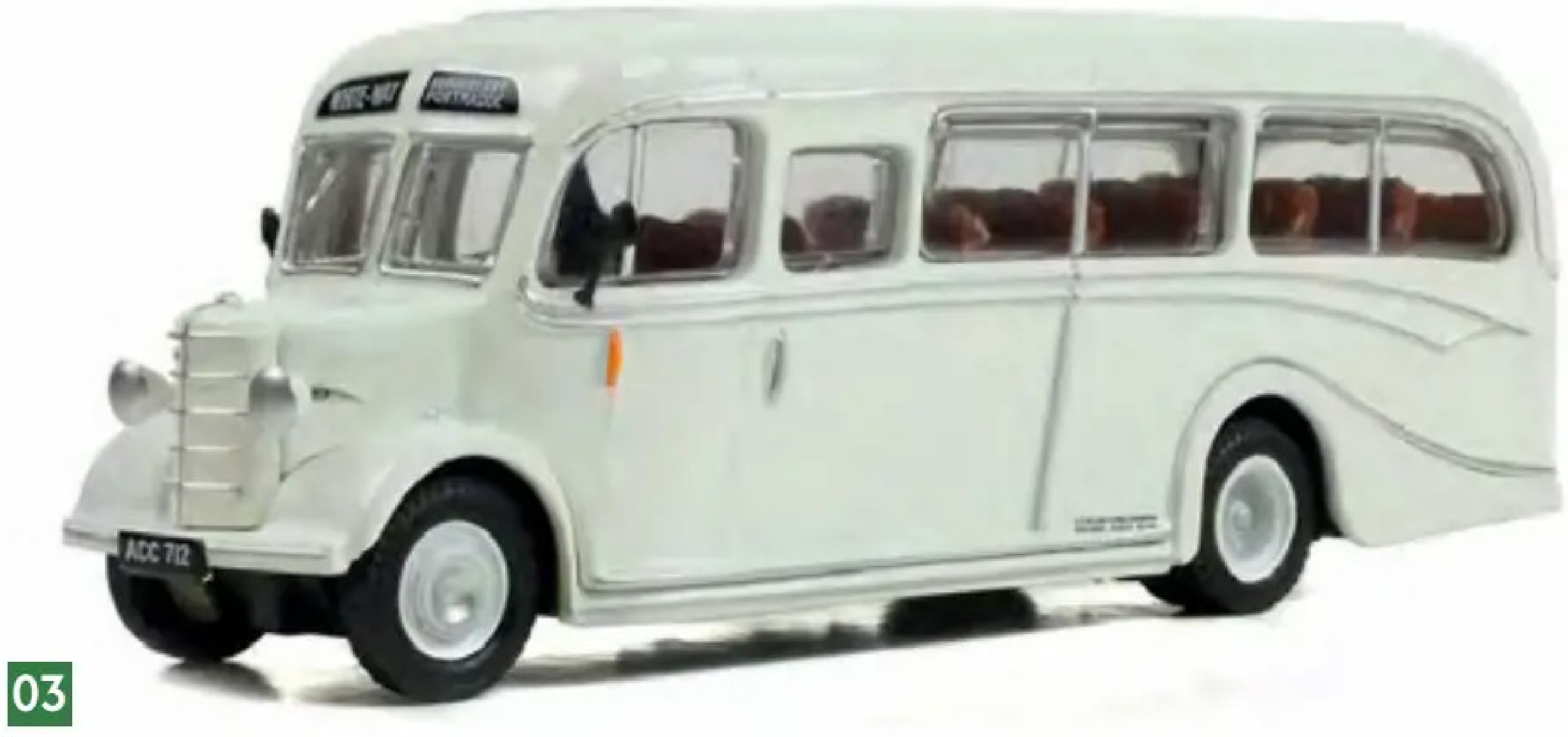
However, looking back to early postwar coach replacement and optimism toward the future, OBs sold well to small operators around the British Isles and the new castings show examples from England, Wales, Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Apart from the new rearview mirrors, which complete an authentic look, a very nice touch is the picking-out of wheelrims in contrast cream on the Margo's and Mulleys coaches and in light green on the Stark's.

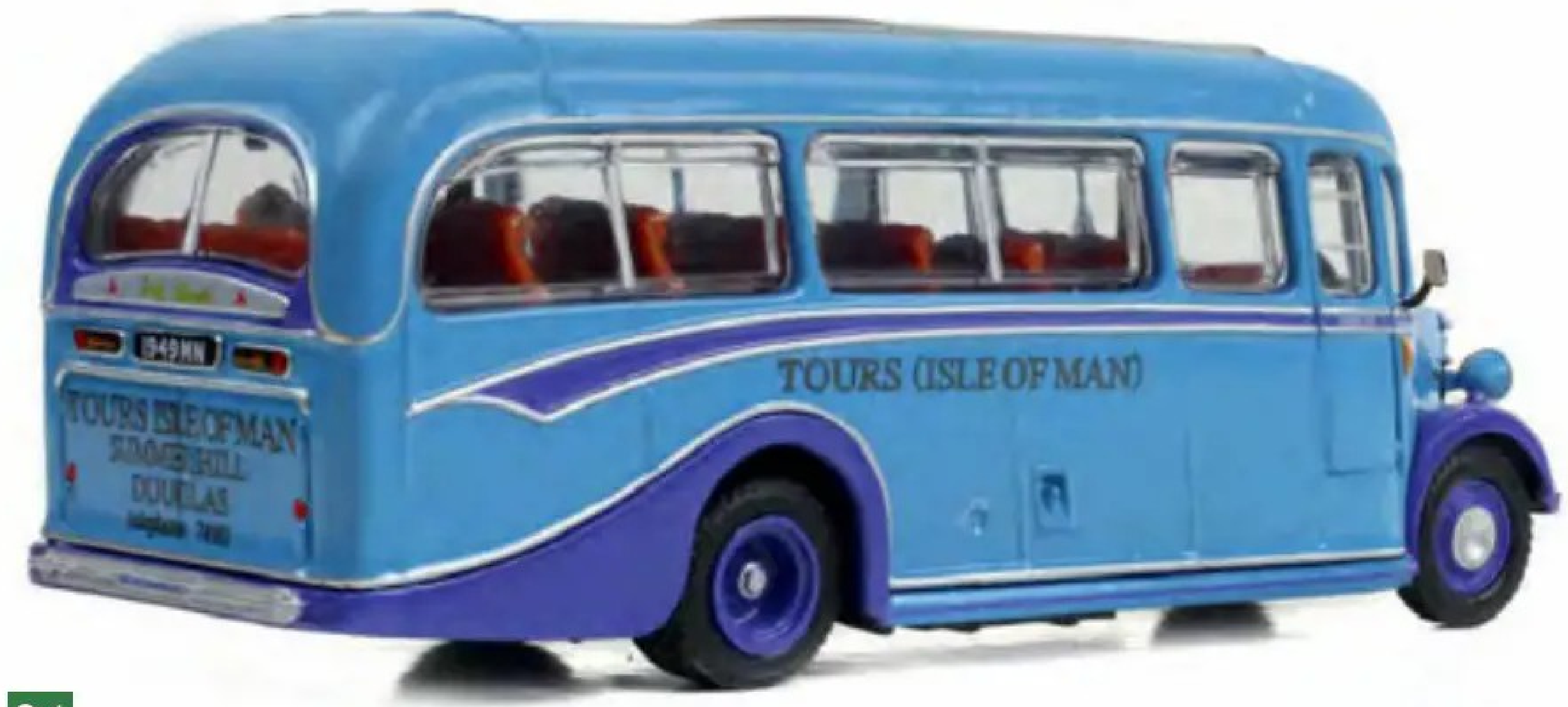
The models are due in stock by the end of 2024 so as soon as I can review the actual thing, I'll do so, with our esteemed Editor's say-so, of course!



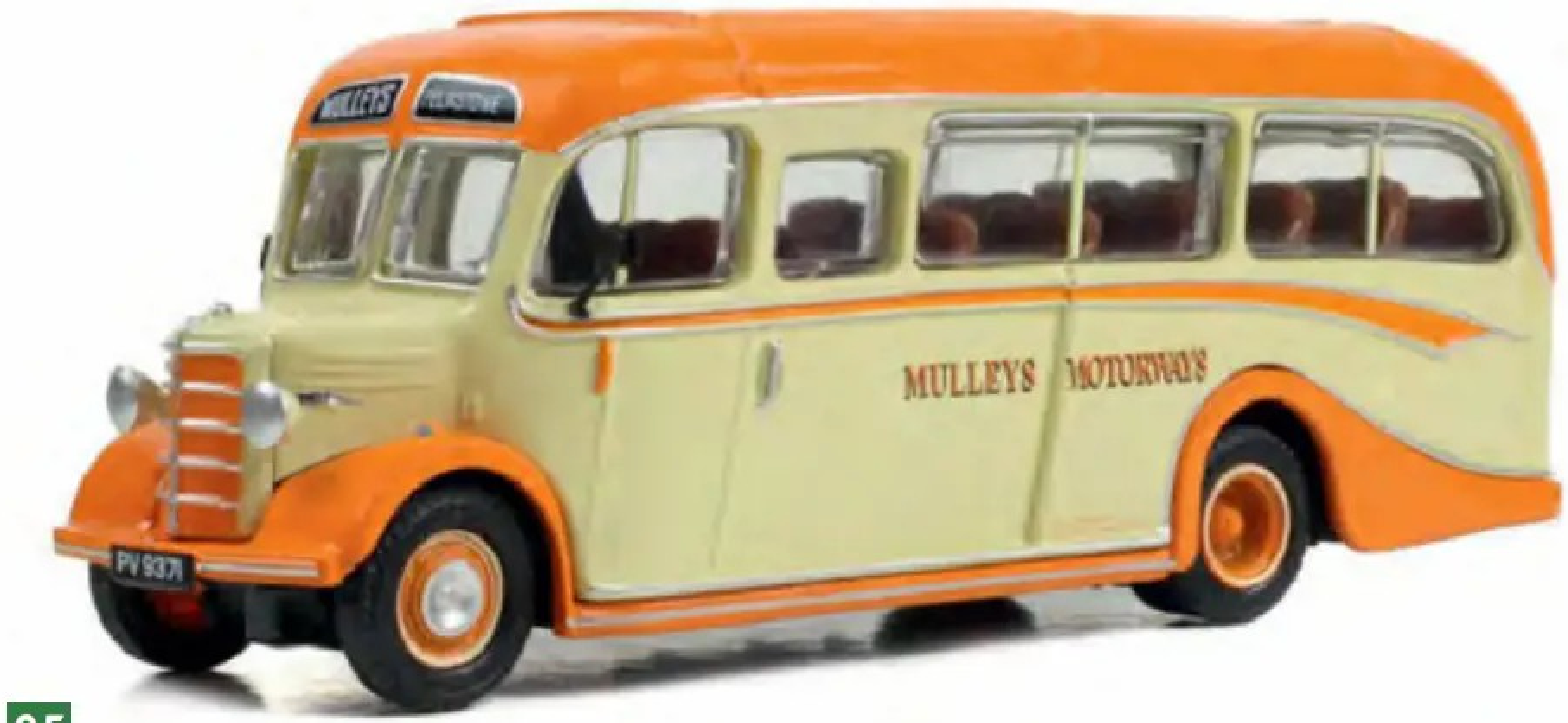
02 B&G Margo's Bexleyheath Transport livery sat well on the really very antique lines of the OB, with the brightwork-edged sweeping trims just oozing vintage character. The detailed fuel filler area lettering is noteworthy.



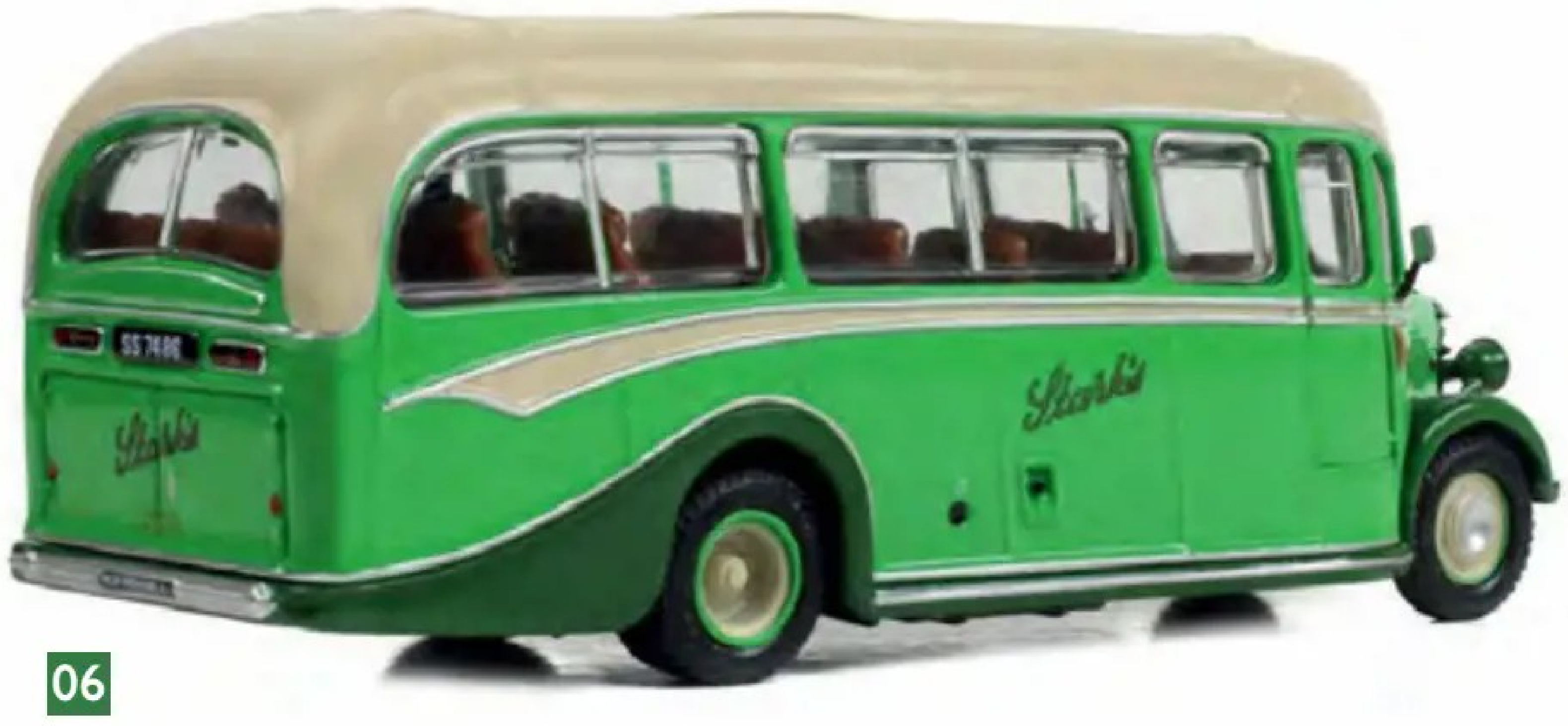
03 To my eyes, a very strange choice with the classic lines of the OB is to choose a fleet with an all-over livery of white: maybe toward the modeller who might wish to undertake their own 'Code 3' repaint perhaps? This one lasted until the 1970s.



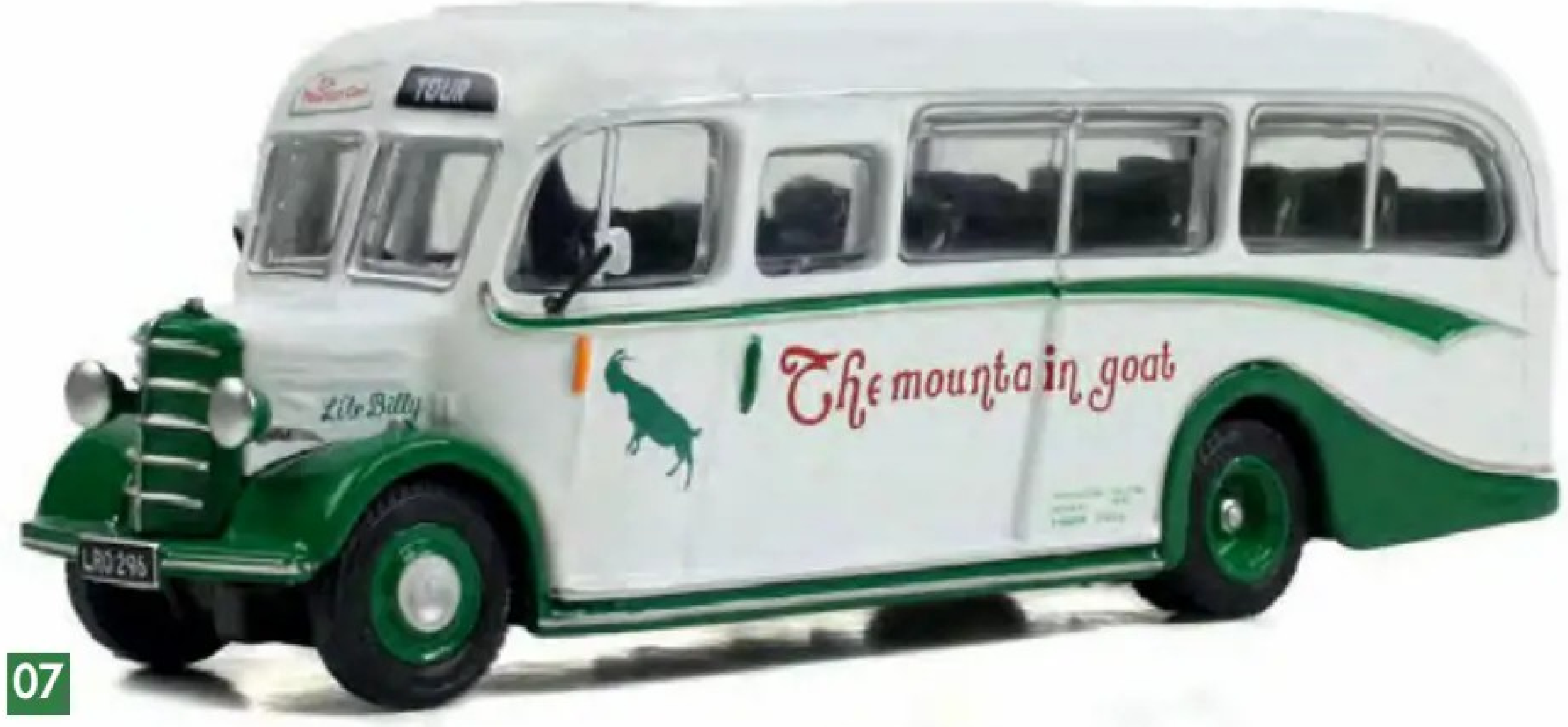
04 Models of Isle of Man vehicles are rare, so how nice to see a Tours vehicle represented, being one of two acquired as heritage vehicles, operating from the 1980s to the 'noughties'. Apart from fuel filler/tank access detailing, it's good to see tiny 'Emergency Door' on that.



05 With my '*Bus & Coach Preservation*' hat on, it's very nice to see an OB from one of our best museums represented with PV 9371. Apart from legal lettering on the nearside, it's great to see a miniscule 'DUPLE' printed on the bonnet side detailing although the pre-production photo does not show its fleet number 26 as carried.



06 Classic script used to be a feature on coach rears. It's good to see EFE has detailed the rear luggage compartment door handle and red stop lamps by printing and Stark's OB is also preserved, as part of the Scottish Vintage Bus collection at Lathalmond.



07 Mountain Goat made a name for itself in going to places other tours never reached around the beautiful Lake District. I don't know if this OB ever reached the 'steepest and highest' of the Goat tour I undertook in 1988 when I took my first car there when brand new, but the spirit of adventure is indicated by the climbing goat 'logo' and name Li'le Billey on the bonnet sides.

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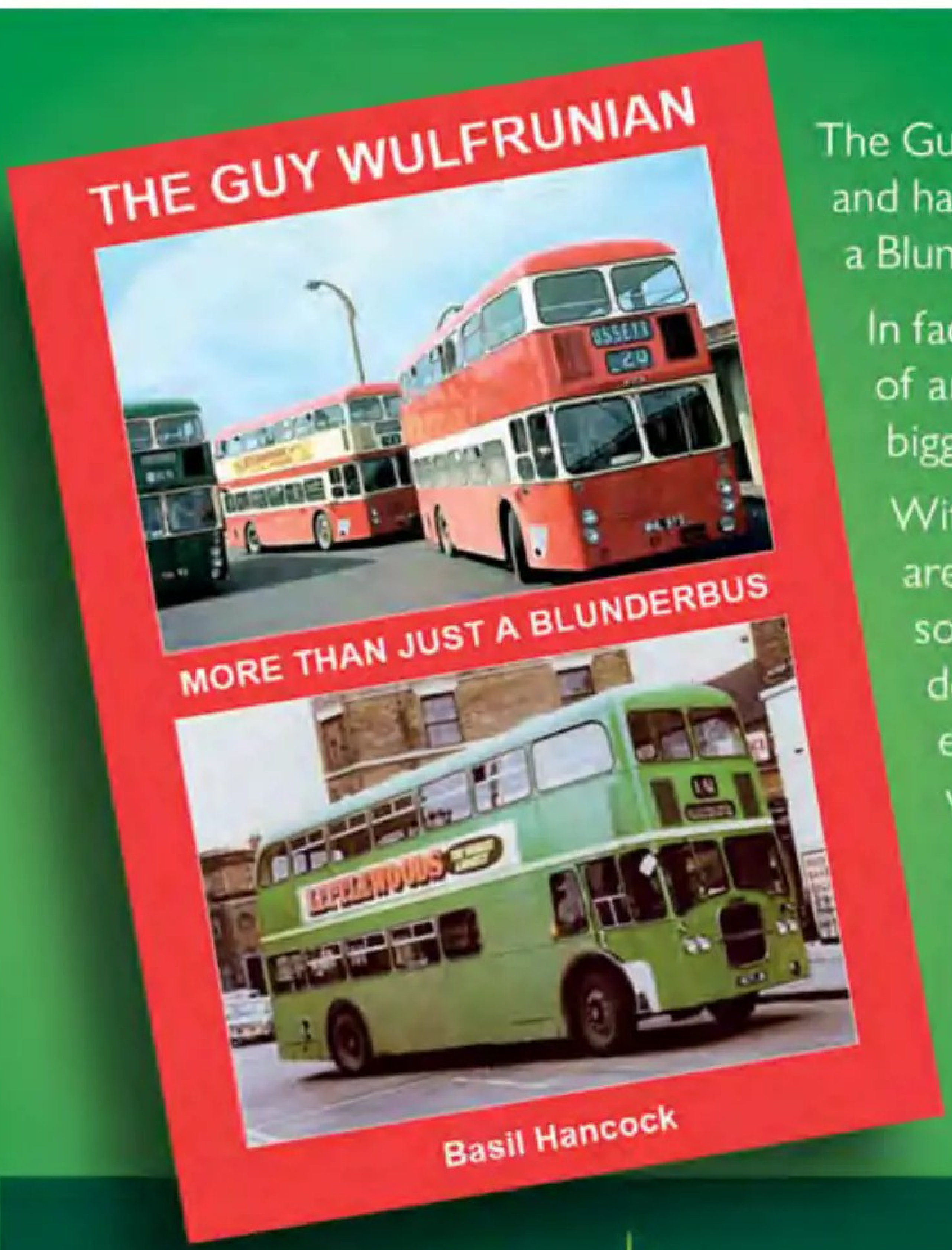
THE GUY WULFRUNIAN

MORE THAN JUST A BLUNDERBUS

Basil Hancock

The Guy Wulfrunian is generally considered to have been a disaster on wheels and has nearly always been described in a negative way. But was it really such a Blunderbus? In reality there were many worse bus disasters around.

In fact the West Riding examples were once attaining the highest mileages of any buses in the fleet and the Wulfrunian went on to leave a much bigger legacy than is generally realised.

With a low floor, air suspension and disc brakes, the Wulfrunian had what are today considered as standard features - but nearly half a century too soon. More than 15,000 double-deck buses used suspension systems derived directly from the Wulfrunian, and even the much-criticised engine position was copied by around 2,400 double-deckers which followed it.

In principle there was nothing wrong with the Wulfrunian. Its main problems were that its manufacturer was financially strapped and could never afford the time or money to fully develop the bus, while in the absence of any other manufacturers following suit at the time, its specialised parts were expensive and hard to obtain.

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In this new self-published A4 hardback book, Basil Hancock, a semi-retired bus designer, engineer and fleet manager, an unashamed fan of the Wulfrunian and a former owner of one of the two preserved examples, tells the full story, the good and the bad.

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10 mins
317
Arnos Grove
CHELSEA PEERS
EAT

01

METRO-
CAMMELL

02

Marvellous
Metro Cammell 1

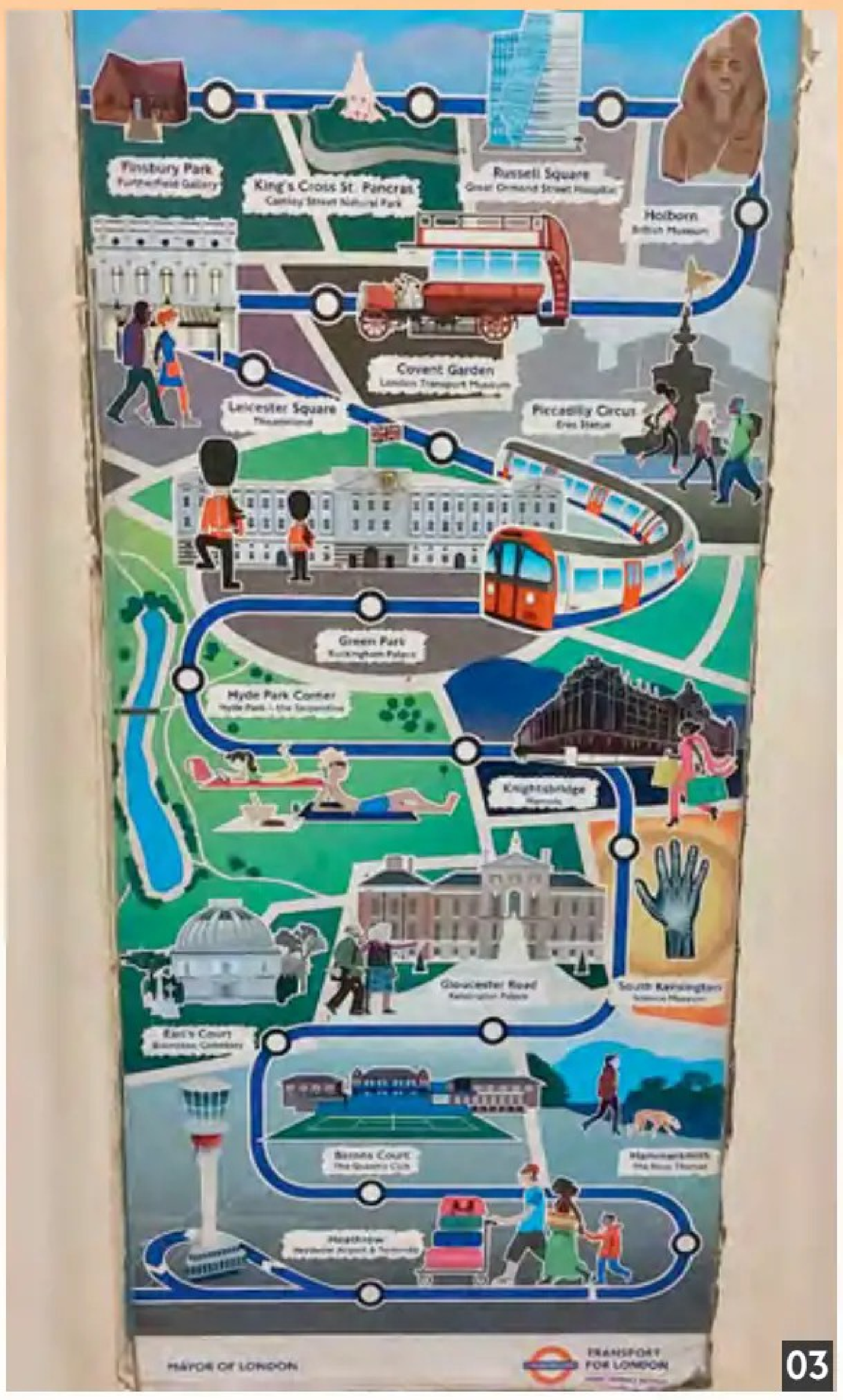
Tributes to Metro-Cammell and remembering the last of the Routemasters now 20 years ago.

We would not normally feature a train in these hallowed pages, but the fact that every day thousands of London Underground passengers step into carriages over footplates bearing the logo of a long-lost builder of buses deserves a short tribute. This is particularly apt as the rolling stock is set for withdrawal in 2025.

As well as its substantial railway interests Metro-Cammell, with roots that can be traced back to 1863, was responsible for thousands of MCW (Metro-Cammell-Weymann) bus bodies as well as complete vehicles in the shape of 4,000 MCW Metrobuses built from 1977 to 1989, the year owners, the Laird Group split and sold off the business to assorted buyers.

The Washwood Heath, Birmingham factory closed 20 years ago in 2005 when then owners, Alstom, completed an order from Virgin trains for Pendolinos.

Metro-Cammell built London Underground's so-called 1973 stock, which actually entered service between 1975 and 1977 and at the time of writing still plying the Piccadilly Line, are set to be withdrawn from 2025. Spot those Metro-Cammell logos while you can.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Russell Square
Holborn
Covent Garden
Leicester Square
Piccadilly Circus
Green Park
Hyde Park Corner
Knightsbridge
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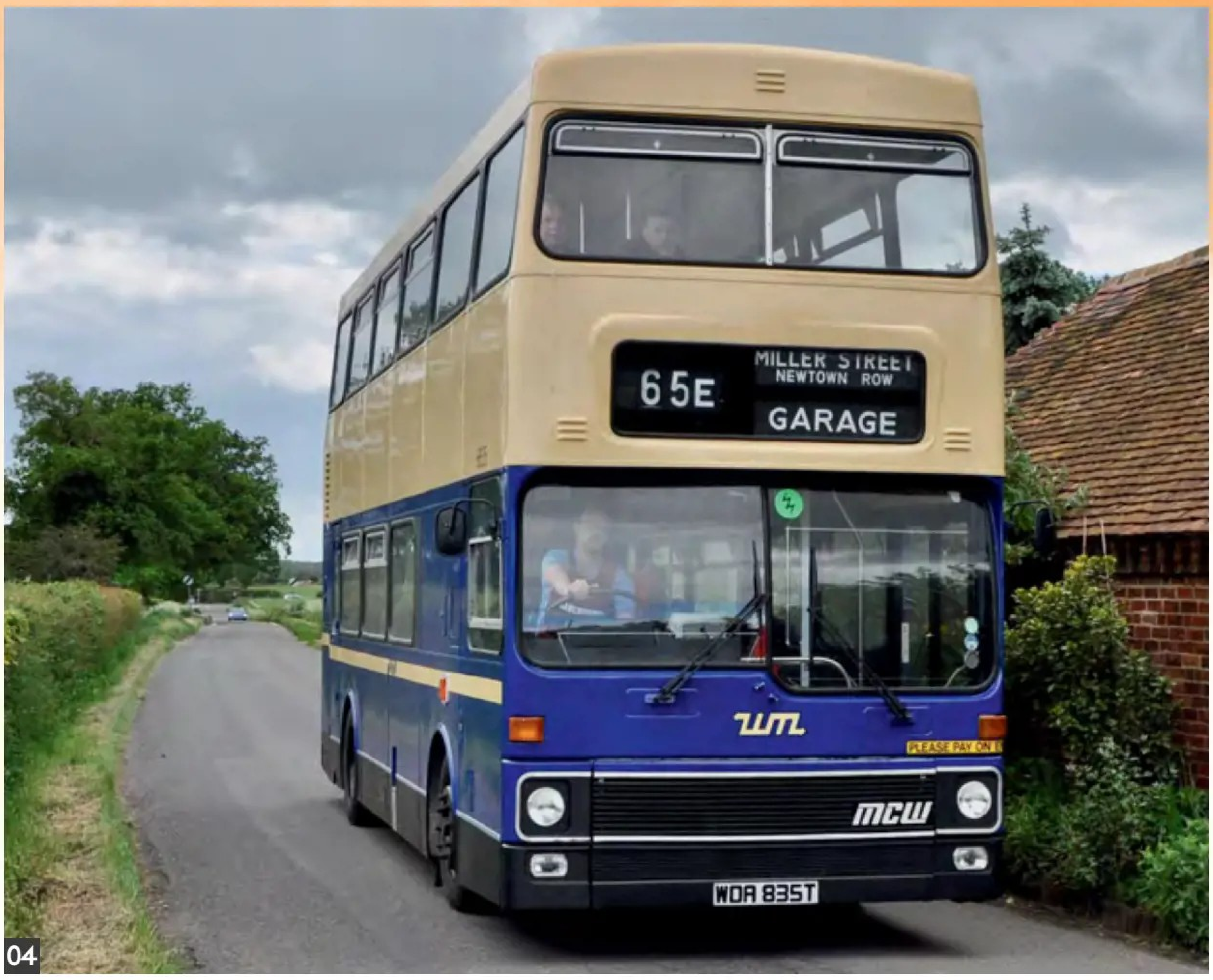
Gloucester Road
Earl's Court
Barons Court
Hammersmith
Heathrow
MAYOR OF LONDON
TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
03


65E
MILLER STREET NEWTOWN ROW
GARAGE
wm
PLEASE PAY ON ENTRY
mcw
WDA 835T
04

01 Piccadilly Line 1973 Stock Metro-Cammell-built trains set for withdrawal from 2025. **NICK LARKIN**

02 Metro-Cammell remembered on London Underground 1973 Stock **NICK LARKIN**

03 B-Type look-alike bus and 1973 Stock underground train on poster advertising joys above the Piccadilly line at street level.

04 No 6835 (WDA 835T), one of first of 4,000 MCW Metrobuses built, is a pre-production example new to West Midlands PTE in 1977 and now part of the Transport Museum Wythall collection. **TMW**

MARVELLOUS METRO CAMMELL 2

We have to admire this great piece of artwork advertising the joy of the Anglo-Swedish agreement 1970-style.

The Metro-Scania was a joint venture between Metro-Cammell Weymann, which provided the bodywork and Scania, responsible for the engines and other mechanicals.

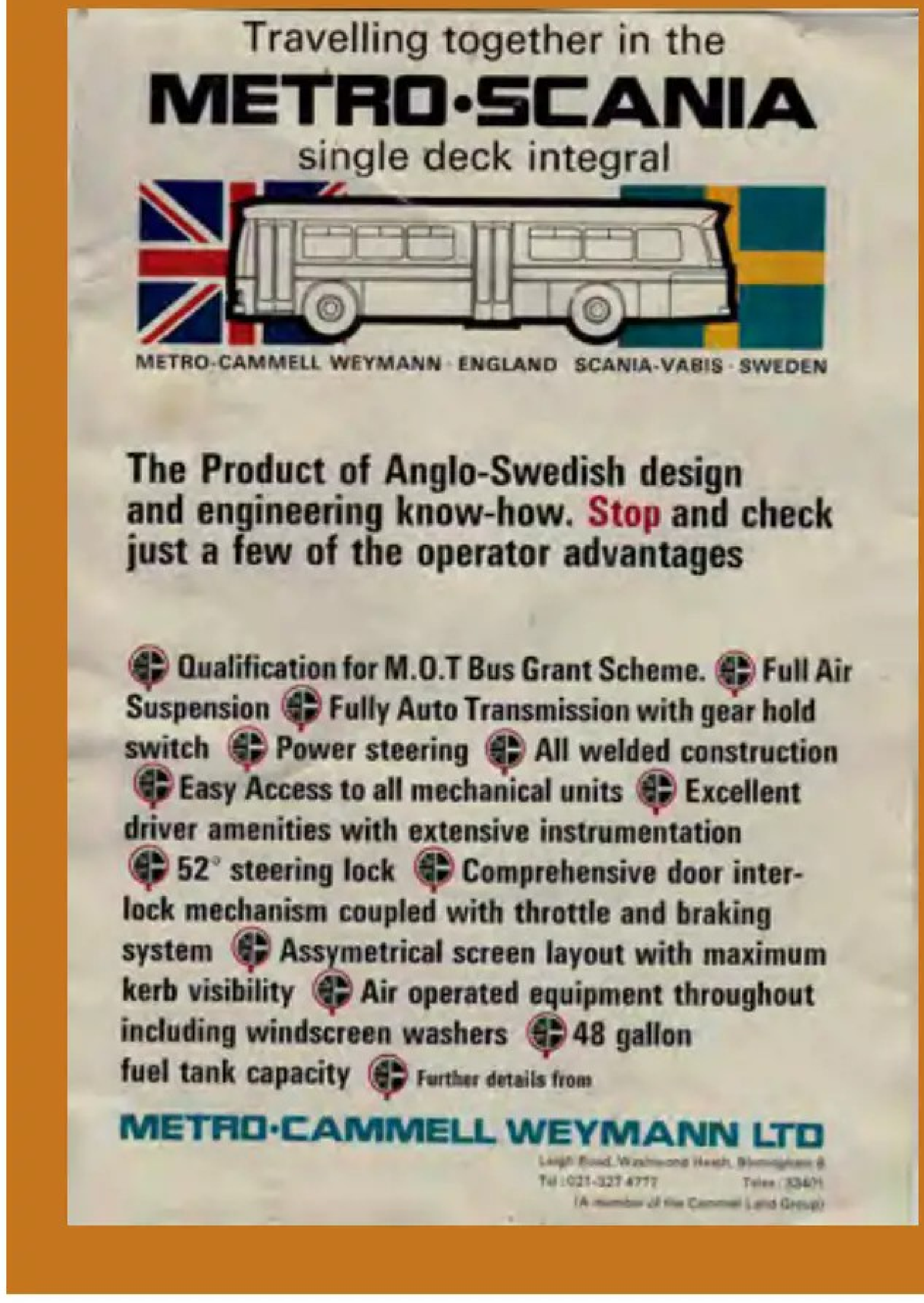
Revealed at the 1970 Commercial Motor Show the turbo-charged bus with air suspension offered excellent performance and ride, but you needed that 48-gallon fuel tank as economy was not great and body corrosion became a problem.

Only 133 Metro-Scanias were built before production ceased in 1973, Newport Transport being the biggest operator, taking 44 examples with 35 going to Leicester City Transport.

Merseyside and Manchester PTEs, London Transport and the independent Winchester-based King Alfred Motor Services were among other customers.

A 'sister vehicle', the Metropolitan double-decker, featuring the same pros and cons appeared between 1973 and 1978 and proved more successful, with London Transport taking 164 and Tyne & Wear PTE 140 among other major customers.

Sadly rot claimed many of the vehicles, although others had long service lives with subsequent operators.



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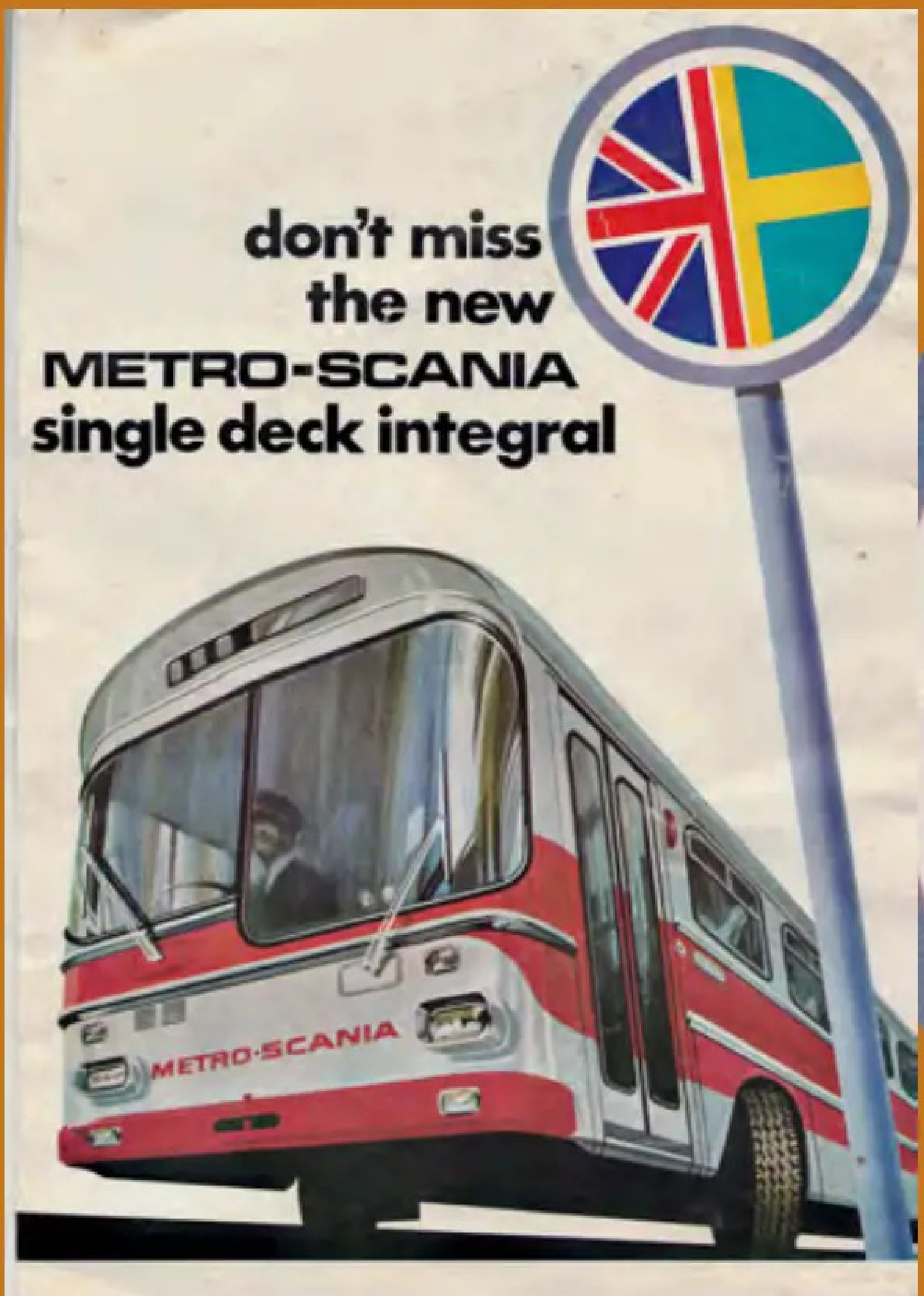
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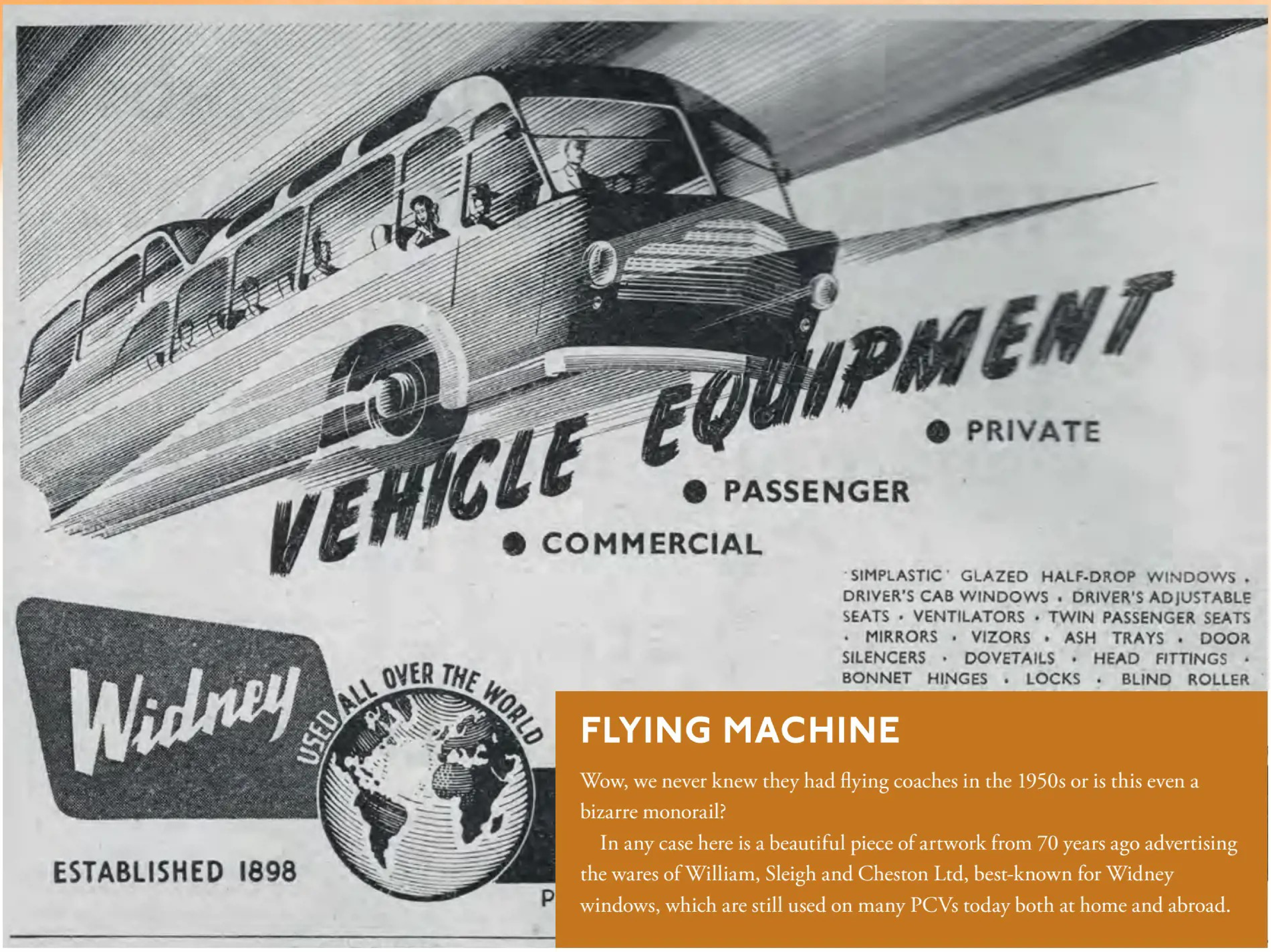

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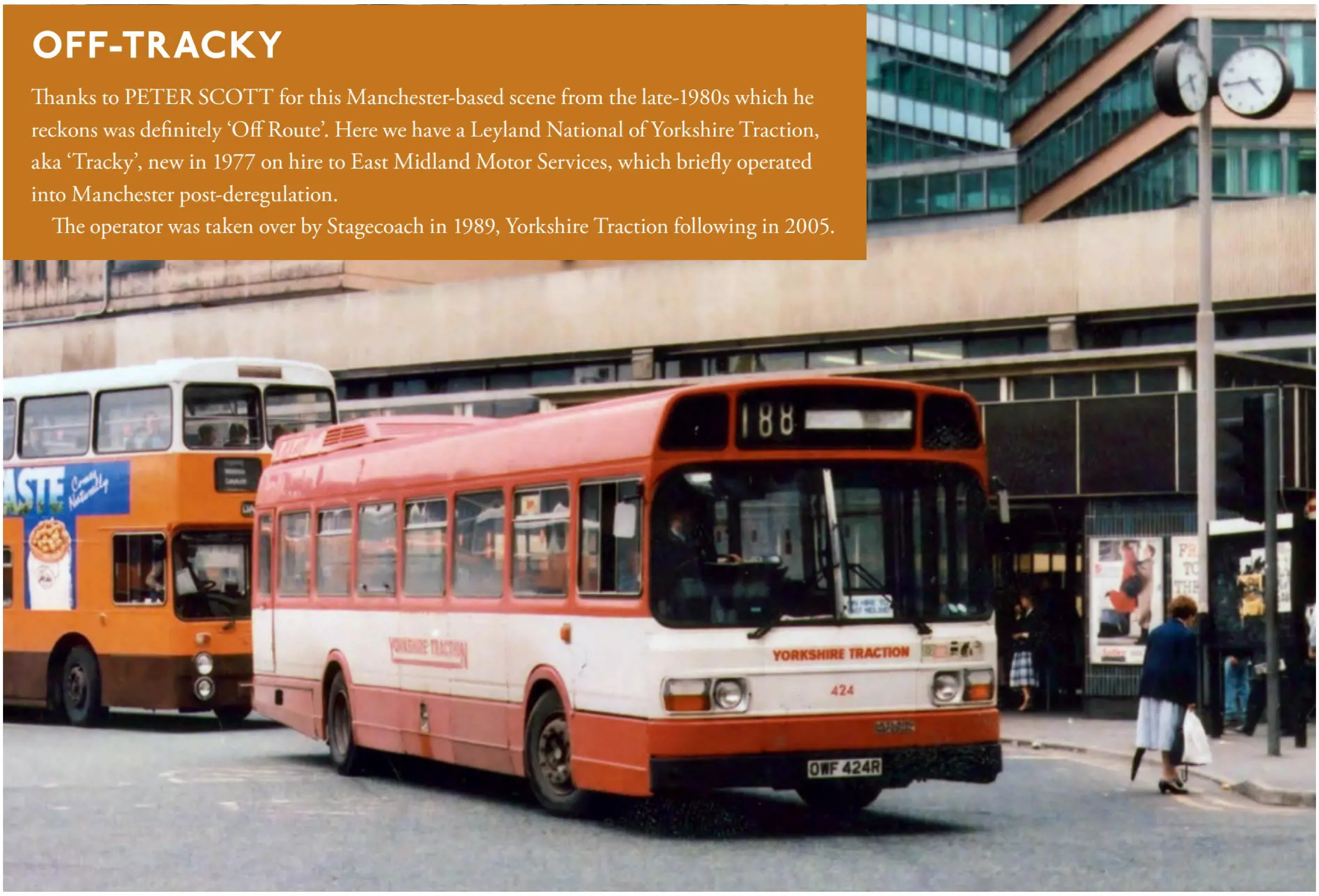
In any case here is a beautiful piece of artwork from 70 years ago advertising the wares of William, Sleigh and Cheston Ltd, best-known for Widney windows, which are still used on many PCVs today both at home and abroad.

OFF-TRACKY

Thanks to PETER SCOTT for this Manchester-based scene from the late-1980s which he reckons was definitely 'Off Route'. Here we have a Leyland National of Yorkshire Traction, aka 'Tracky', new in 1977 on hire to East Midland Motor Services, which briefly operated into Manchester post-deregulation.

The operator was taken over by Stagecoach in 1989, Yorkshire Traction following in 2005.



Pictures: NICK LARKIN COLLECTION/NICK LARKIN

TWENTY YEARS ON

Incredibly, 2025 will see the 20th anniversary of AEC Routemasters being withdrawn from 'normal' London service, with the world watching on their final day, Friday 9 December 2005.

It's possibly even more shocking that two decades have elapsed since the amazing 2004 finale of AEC Routemasters on London routes 9, 73 and 390. Seems like a couple of years ago! The last evening (3 September) brought out appreciative crowds with people of all backgrounds celebrating the buses and pubgoers waving as the vehicles passed by on their final runs.

With conductors losing their jobs, and Mercedes-Benz Citaro 'bendy buses' taking over from RMs on the 73, it was a rather bitter-sweet event, being the biggest Routemaster finale as far as numbers of vehicles was concerned.

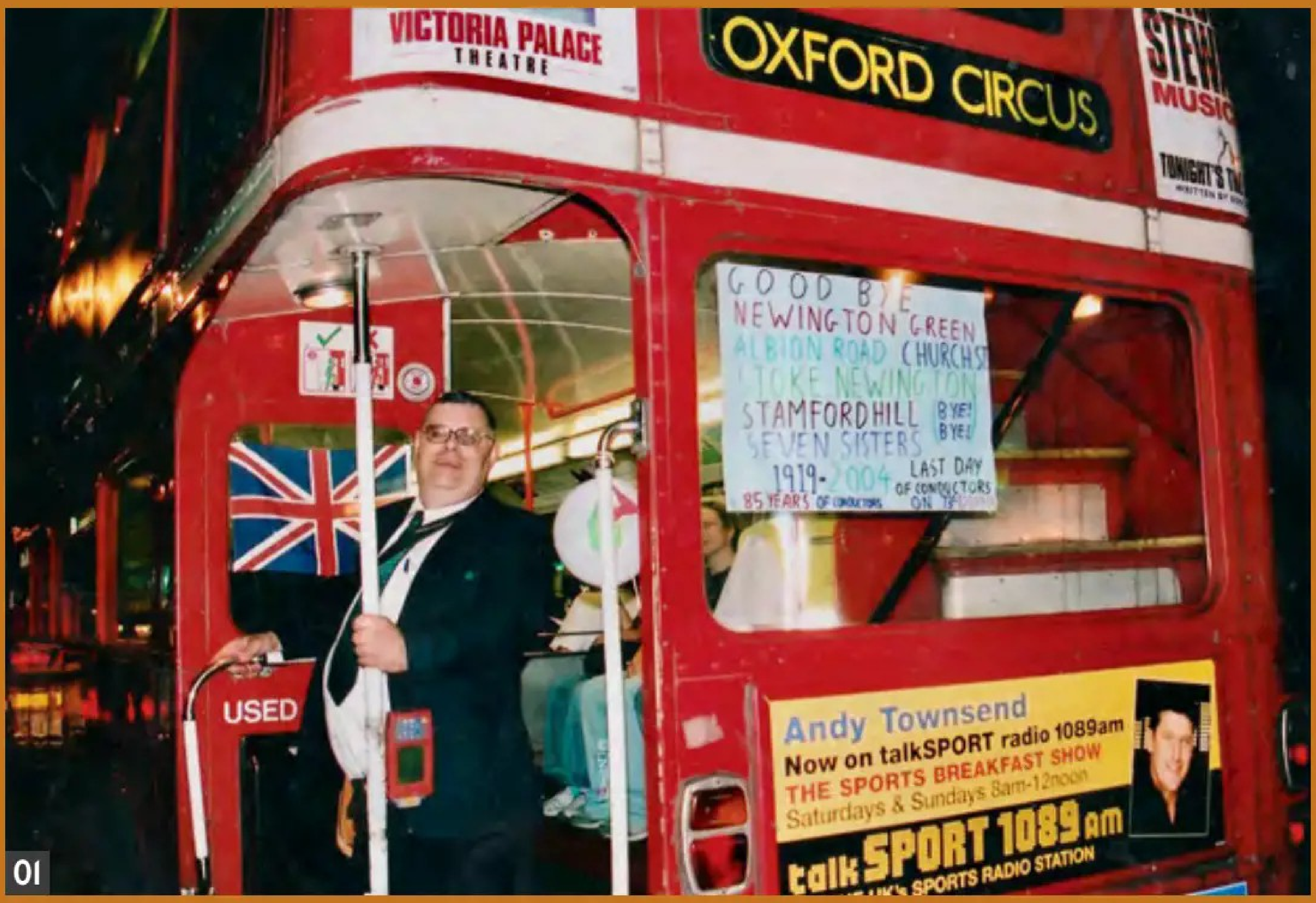
The 'normal' service RMs were joined numerous heritage vehicles on the routes, including Routemasters RM1 and RM3, plus various RTs, an RTL and many others, which were an increasingly popular feature of these 'last day' events and a fine sight.

01 Always thought this picture summed up the final evening of Routemasters on route 73.
NICK LARKIN

02 Not everyone agreed that route 73 was getting better from every angle.
NICK LARKIN

03 RM5, looking immaculate and about to depart from Victoria station.
NICK LARKIN

04 Routemaster operation also ended on route 390. RML2659 carried a rather ironic recruitment advert asking: 'Could you keep this bus on the road?'
NICK LARKIN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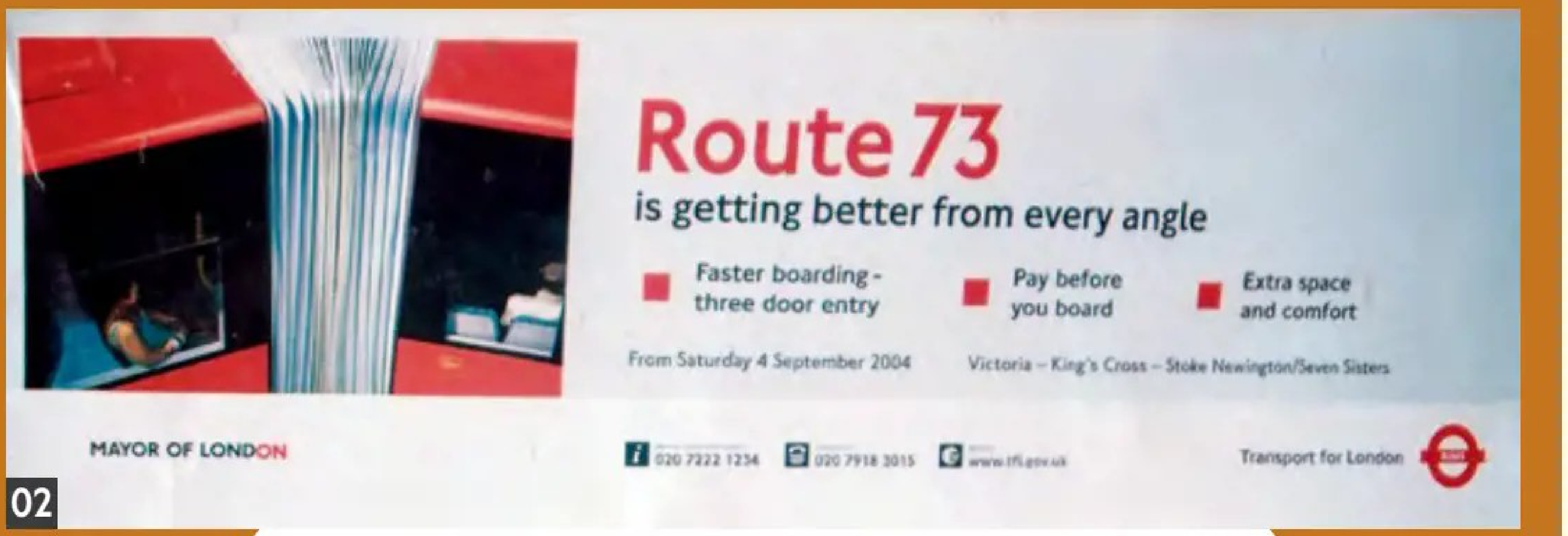
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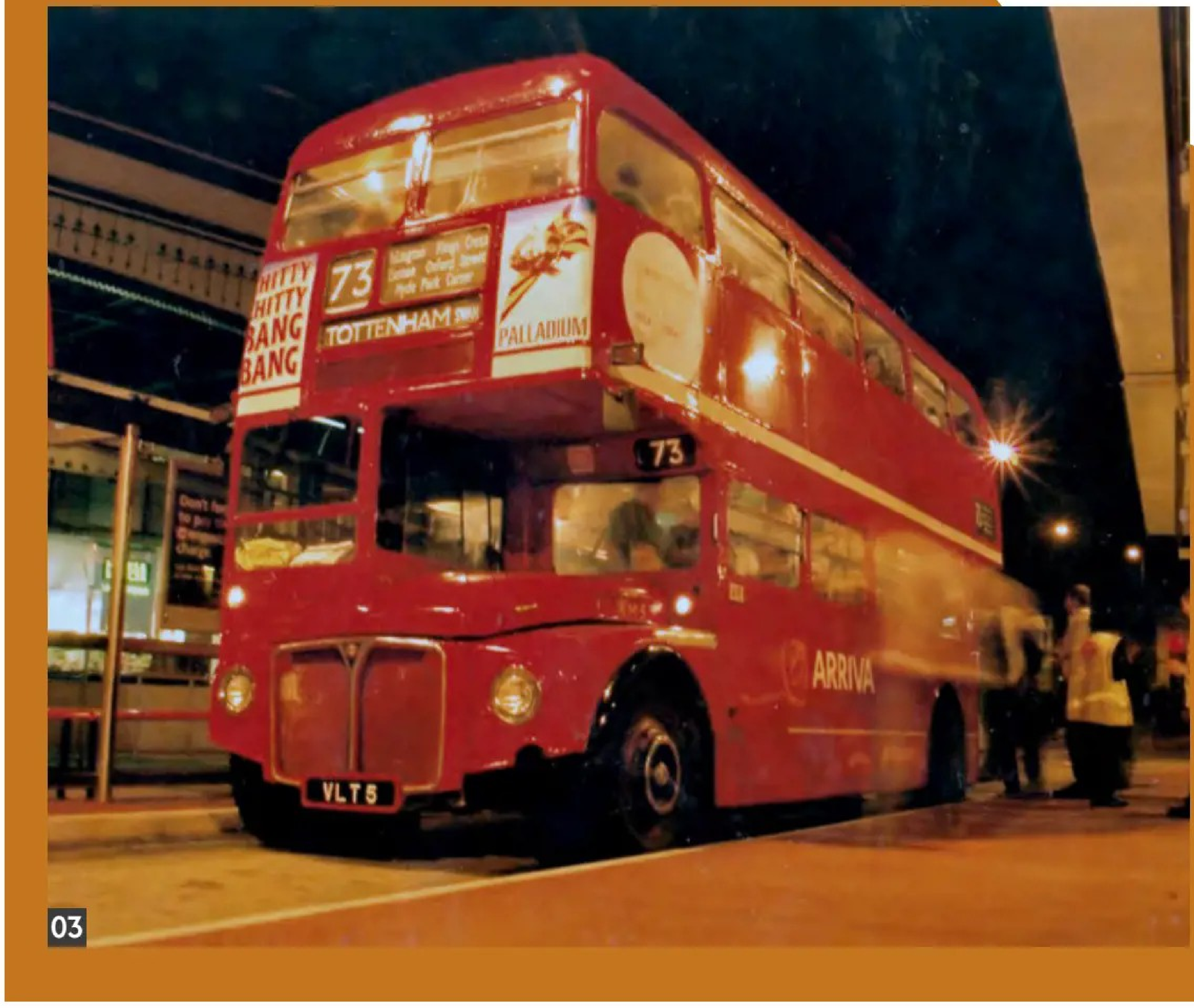
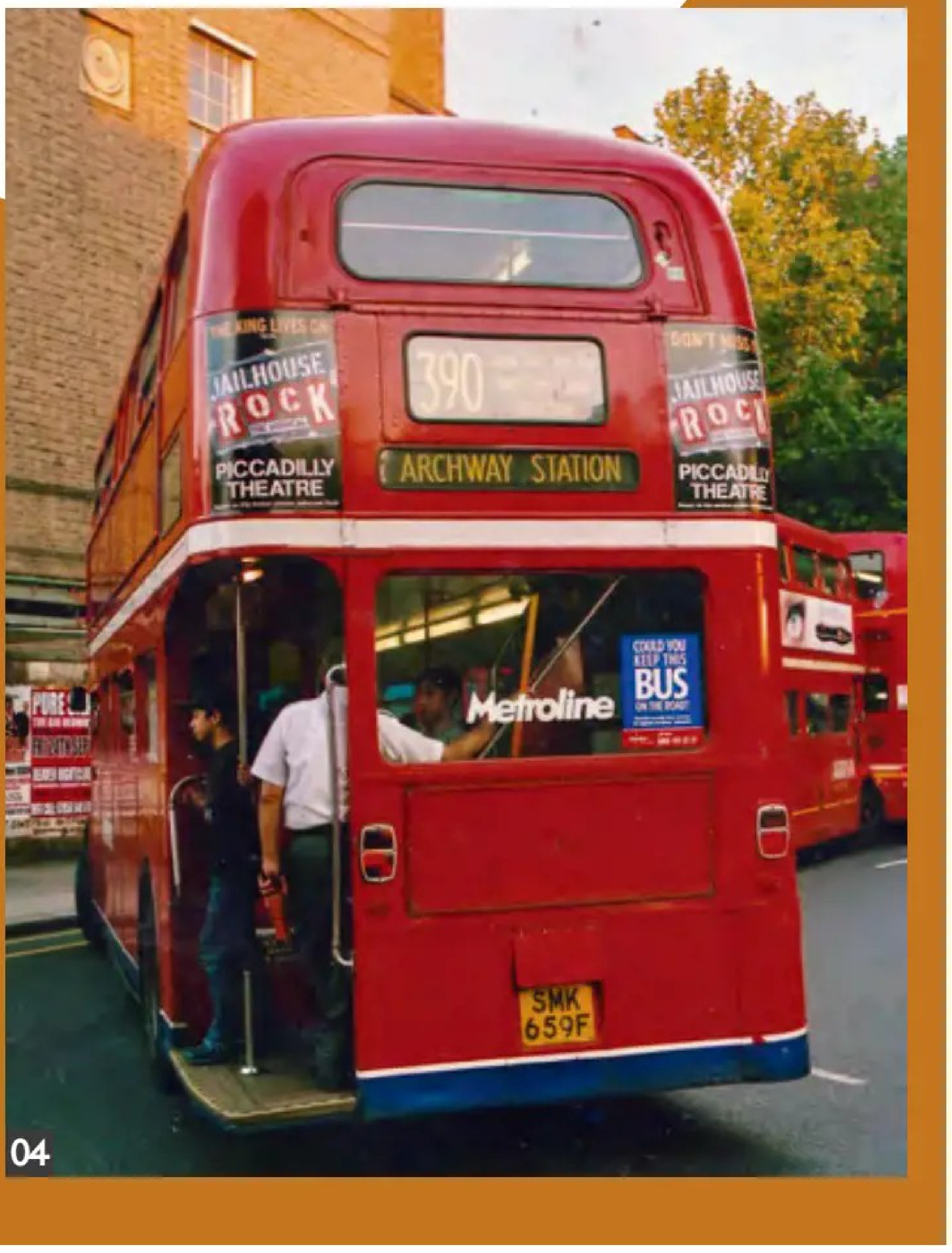

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG
73
TOTTENHAM
PALLADIUM
73
ARRIVA
VLT 5
03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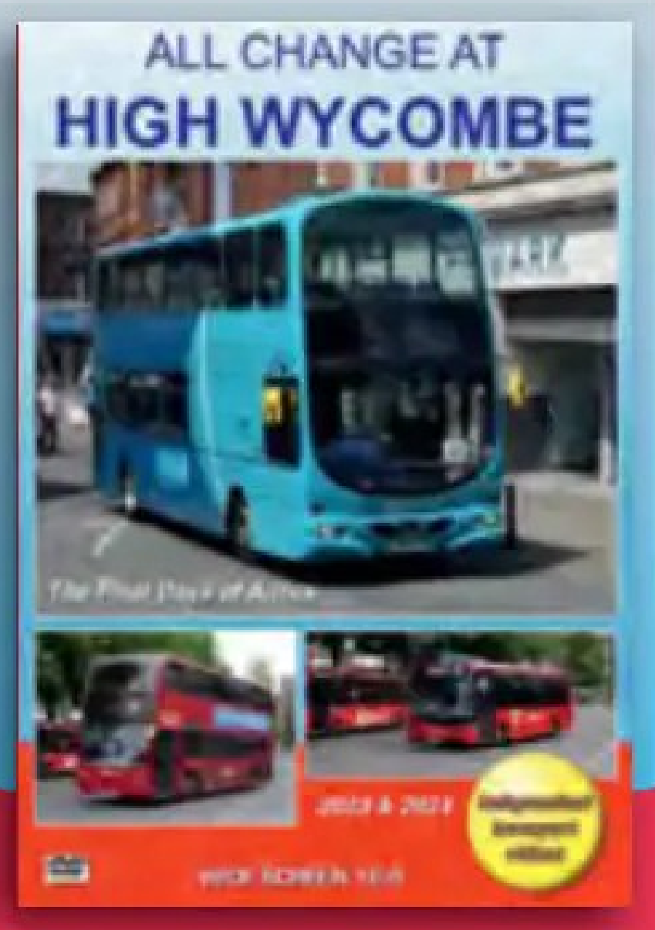
438 Greater Manchester Buses - City & Heritage

GREATER MANCHESTER BUSES
AROUND MANCHESTER

439 Greater Manchester Buses - Around Manchester

ROUTEMASTER
70
YEARS
1954
2024
WIDE SCREEN 16:9

465 Routemaster 70



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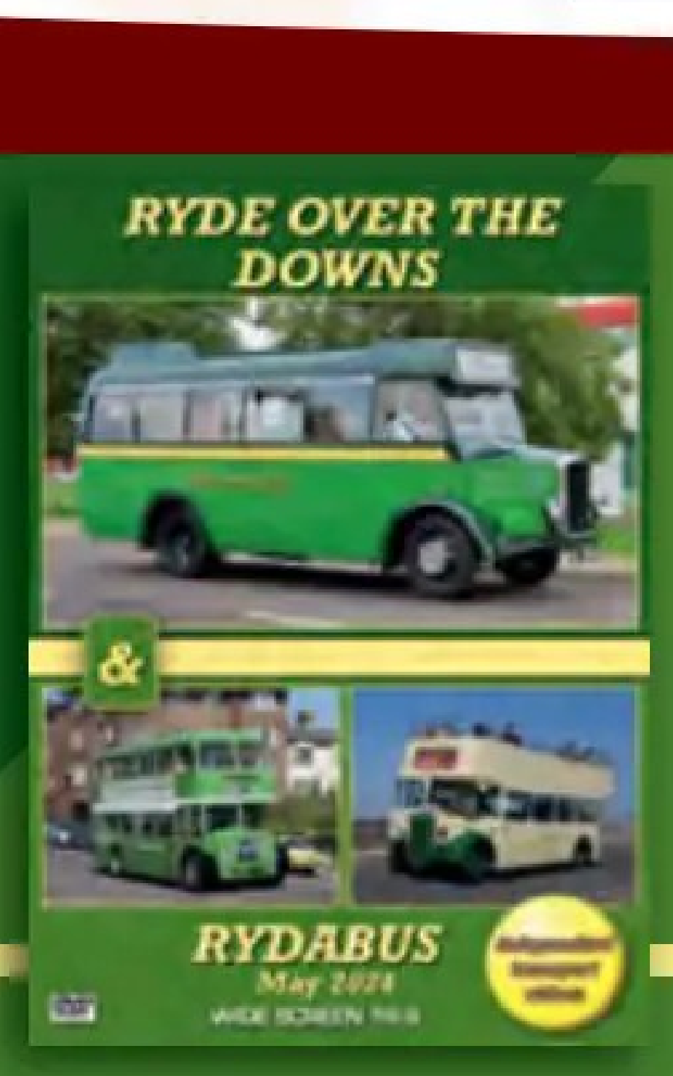

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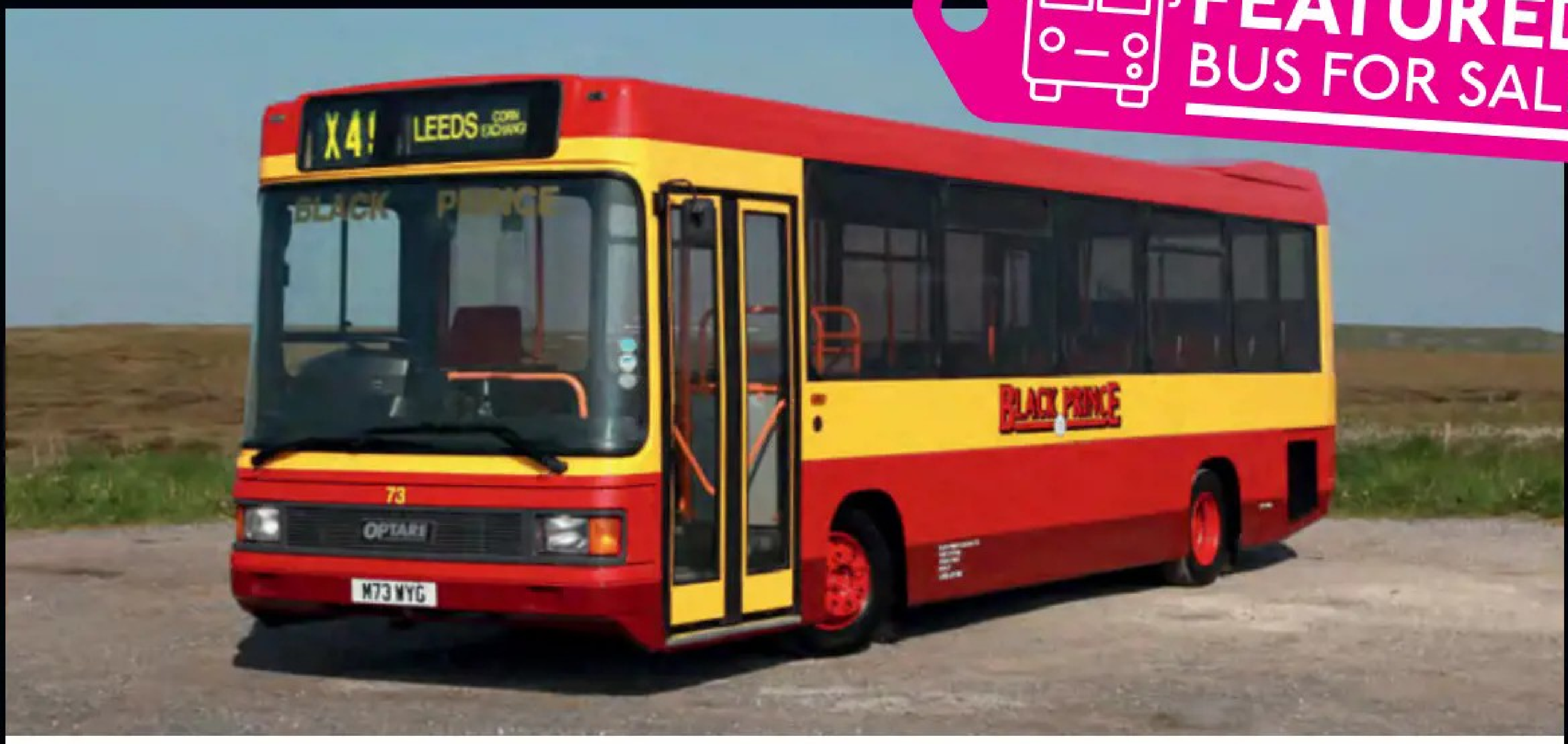

MAN 11.190/Optare Vecta

New to Black Prince, Morley in February 1995, it later served with Lodge's Coaches until purchased for preservation in January 2015. It received a full mechanical overhaul that year at Pelican MAN. During 2016 it went to Bus & Coach World, Blackburn and had all lower skirt panels replaced, new bumpers and windscreen fitted, driver's seat refurbished, and a complete respray in original Black Prince livery. It has received an annual service during preservation and had two new front tyres fitted on its last MoT, which expired in June 2023. It has been SORNd and in undercover storage since then due to other commitments and it is now time for a new owner to enjoy and use this lovely little bus in continued preservation.

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INDEX

Buses and coaches for sale I
Bus and coach parts for sale V
Storage Available V
Storage Wanted V
Books Wanted V
Models for sale V
Photographs for sale V
Events V

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(not listed this month):

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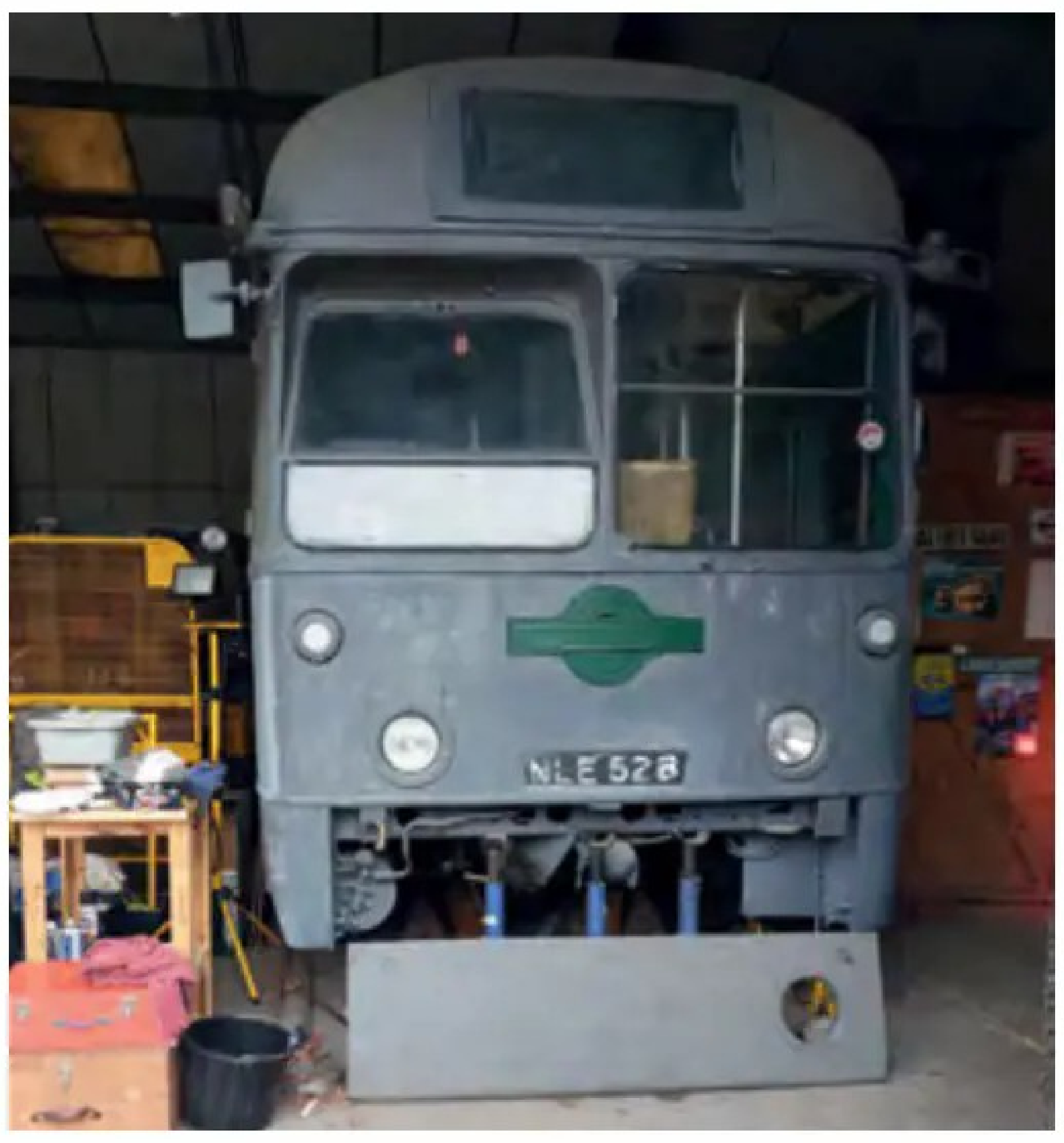
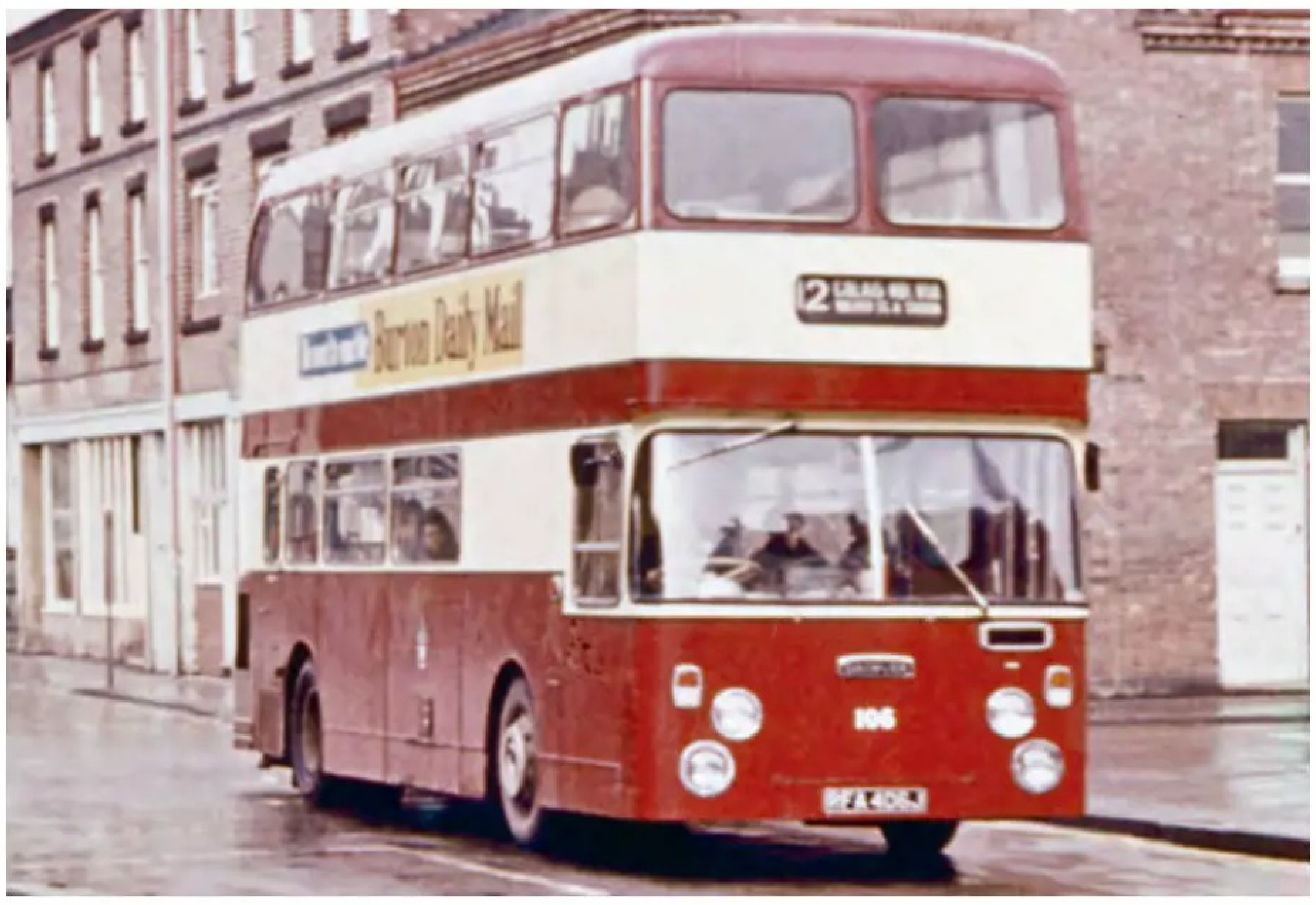
Buses and Coaches For Sale



RF 528 ex London Transport/Country bus. Some works carried out. Vehicle currently SoRN. Complete with engine and gearbox. Will require transport. Located in West Suffolk. Contact Michael on email: michael.cleavely@virgin.net or mobile : 07726 923220 Offers in the region of £5000 considered.



Daimler Fleetline/Northern Counties Burton-upon-Trent RFA 406J. Purchased in 2019 from the estate of Stephen Meredith. The vehicle will require major restoration. Picture shows the bus when in service. £2,500 ovno. Contact Ian Speed on Mobile 07970 056373

Daimler Fleetline/Northern Counties Derby 301 (GTO 301V). The vehicle requires light/cosmetic restoration to make it roadworthy. £2,500 ovno. Contact Ian Speed on Mobile 07970 056373

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Bus & Coach Parts For Sale

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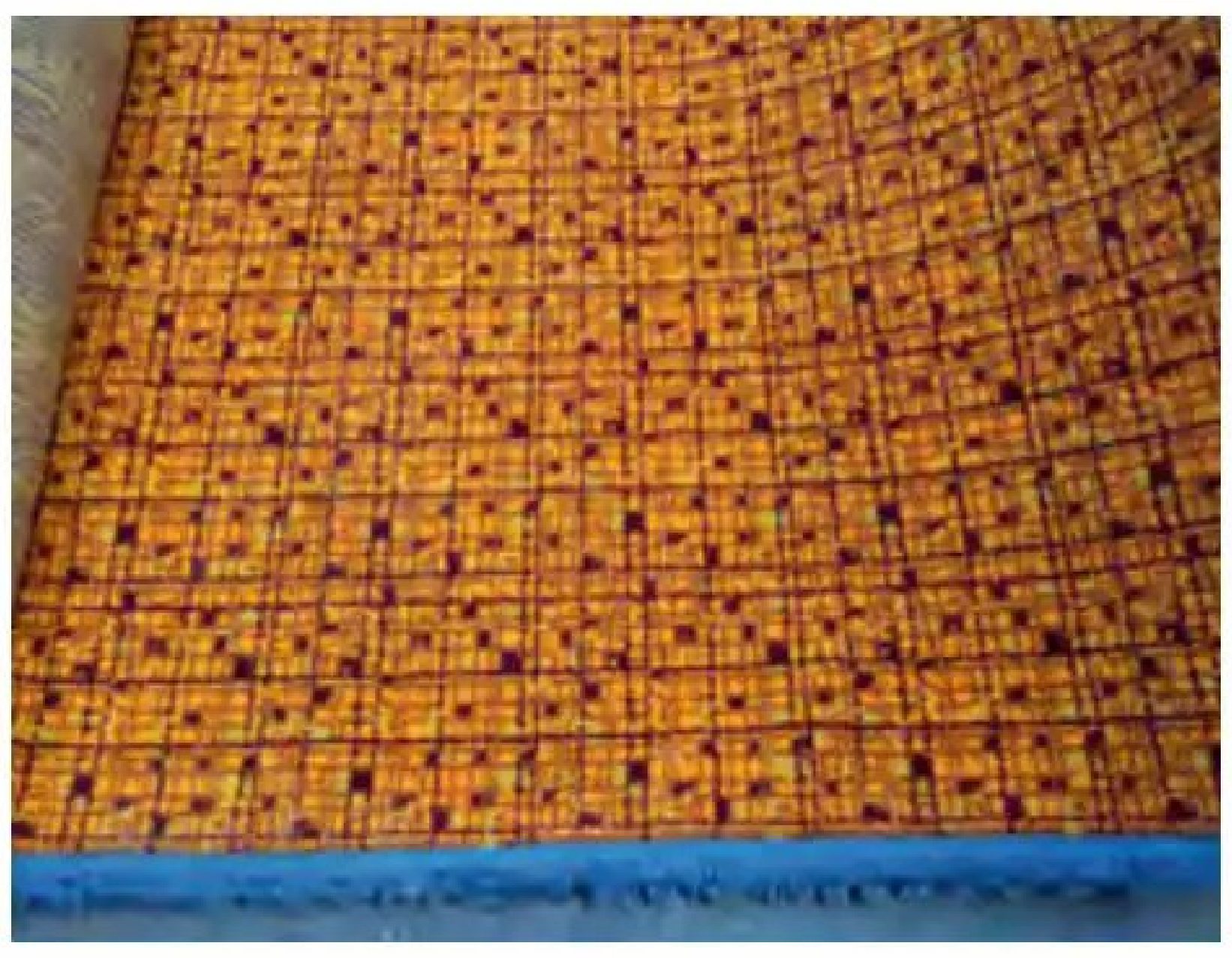

Storage Wanted

Storage required for 1950s Duple coach in full running order, due to loss of current facilities. Based in Herts, but all options considered. Contact: Ted Hewitt: hewittsquickley@btinternet.com or text to 07730 979870

Books Wanted

Buses in Ulster Volume 4 Ulsterbus 1967 to 1988 by G. Irvine Miller ISBN 9781 8983 9281 1, published by Colour Print. Also London Country Buses {South} by Laurie Akehurst. ISBN 9781 9106 5428 6. Published by by Adam Gordon (AG-428-O). Contact Ian: ianaustinwigley@hotmail.co.uk

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Large number of built and painted white metal model bus kits for sale, varying conditions, including many hard to find examples: Bristol RE, Plaxton Panoramas, Duple Dominants etc. Suitable for spares, repairs, or restoration projects. All cheap to clear. Also, a number of diecast, EFE, ABC, OOC, some rarer ones. Full list available from M Bacon, 54 Pen Y Mynydd, Cymmer, Port Talbot, SA13 3RL, or telephone 01639 282683.

Photographs For Sale

MODERN BUS & COACH PHOTOGRAPHS 6 x 4 size colour printed to order @ 30p each + postage. Many Go South Coast fleets including transfers, repaints & ex London. Other 2024 locations include Cornwall, Manchester Bee Network, Warrington, Brighton, Bath, Cardiff, Reading & Oxford. For Lists, please email: david@oborn.co.uk stating operators/bus types required.

Events

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the following information, the publishers cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions. Readers are encouraged to check for themselves details of all events and venues before setting out.

2025 EVENTS

Please send details of your 2025 bus rally, running day, museum event or transport fair to **david.n.jukes@btinternet.com** for inclusion in the ***Bus & Coach Preservation* 2025 Rally Guide.** The information deadline is **1 February 2025.**

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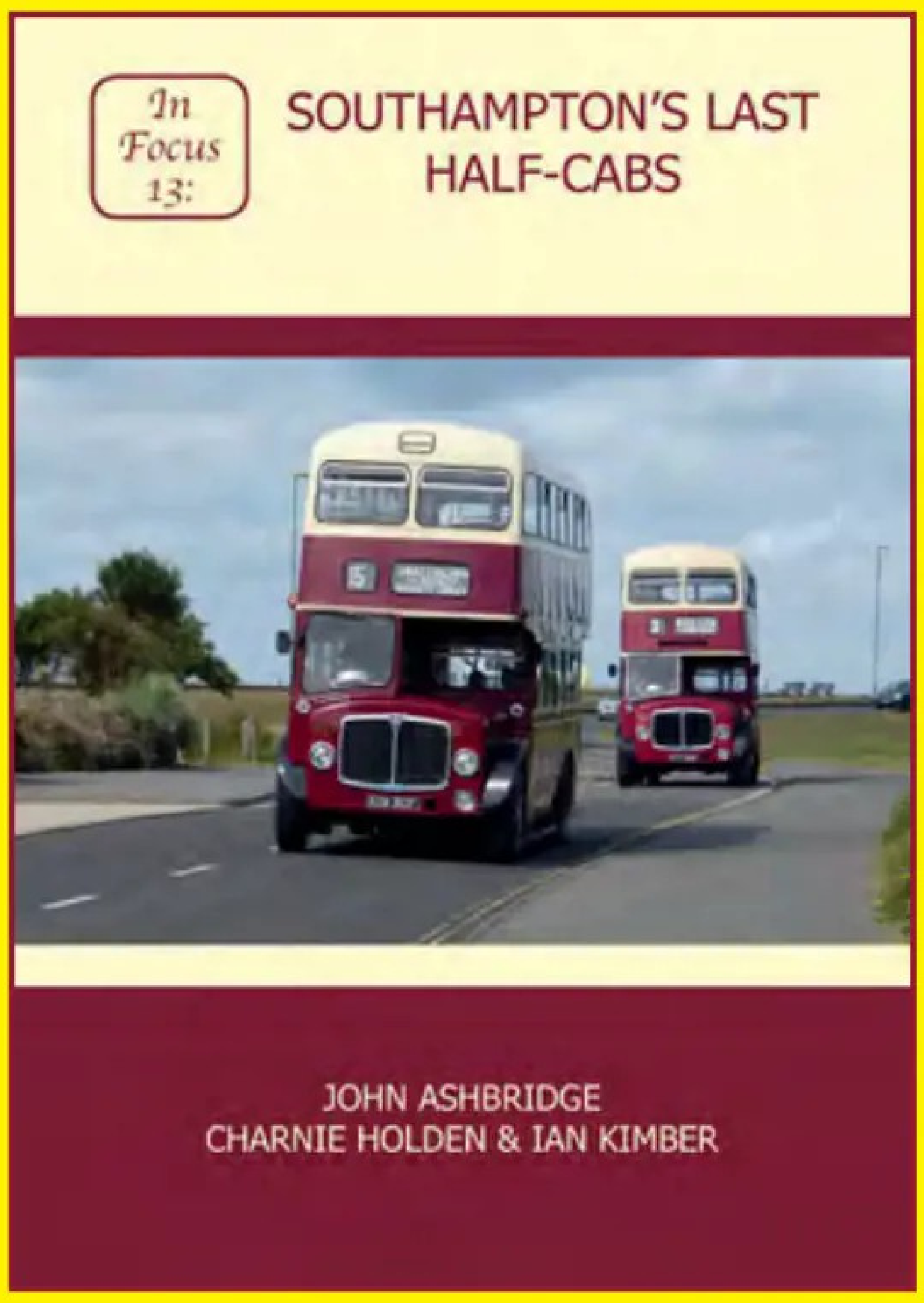

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Greater Manchester Museum of Transport. Christmas Cracker Event. Details: motgm.uk.

SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER
Nottingham Heritage Vehicles Charity. Shop Open Day. The Heritage Bus Depot, Portland Road, Hucknall NG15 7SF.

SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER
Ipswich Transport Museum. The Christmas Cracker. 11.00-16.00. Festive family-themed event. Decorations, lights & entertainment in Museum. Bus rides. Meet Santa (grotto entry £2 extra including gift). Details: ipswichtransportmuseum.co.uk.

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER
Oxford Bus Museum. Santa Visiting. Bus Rides. Station Yard, Long Hanborough OX29 8LA. Details: www.oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk, 01993 883617 (when museum open), or 01296 925797 (when closed).

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER
Nottingham Heritage Vehicles Charity. Twilight Open Day. The Heritage Bus Depot, Portland Road, Hucknall NG15 7SF.

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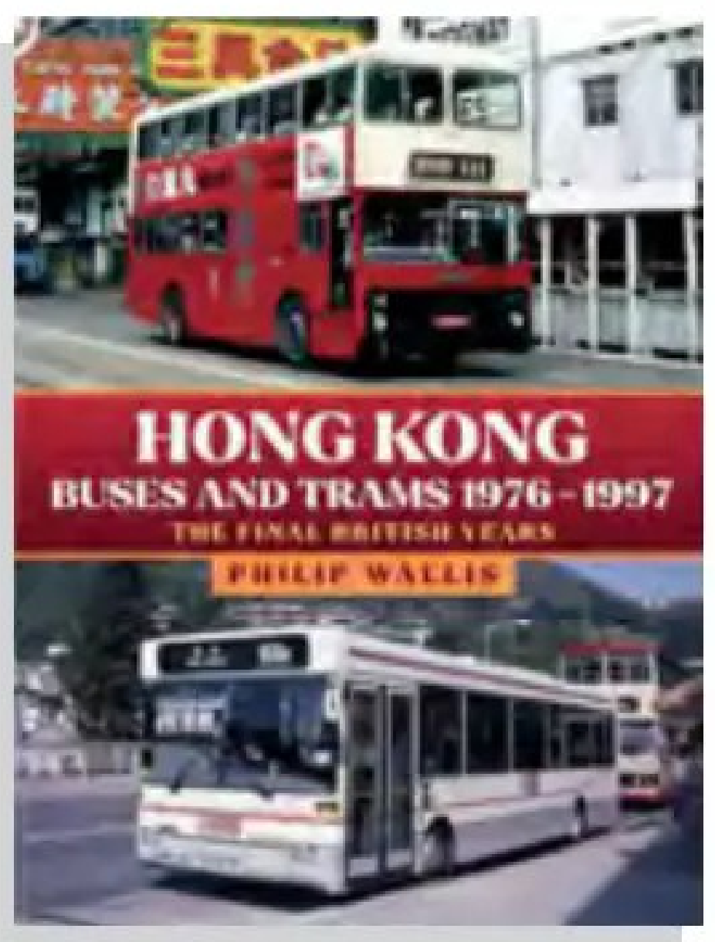
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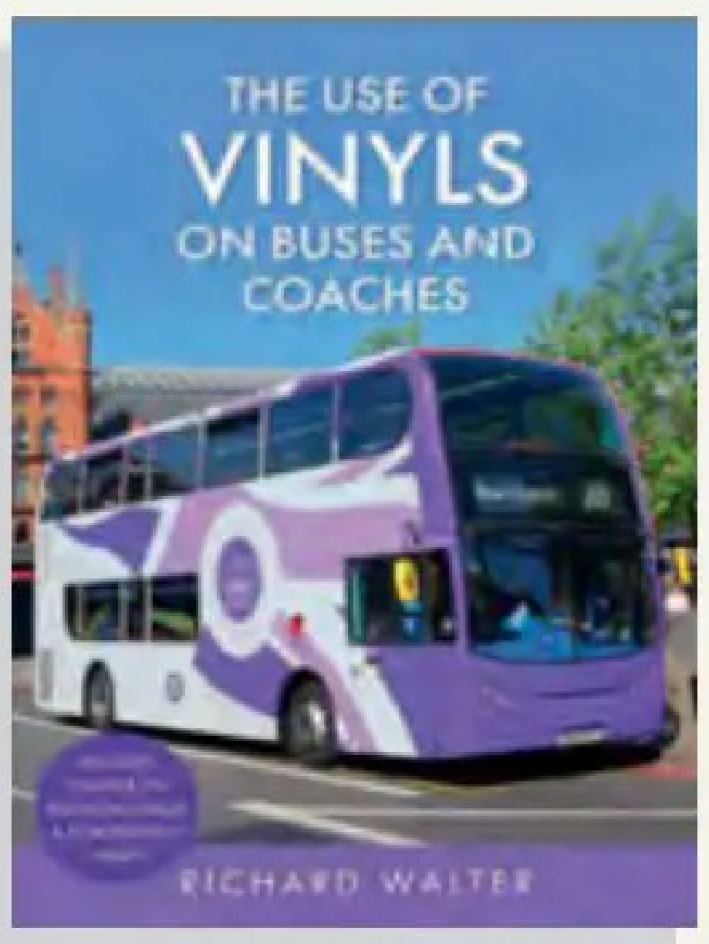
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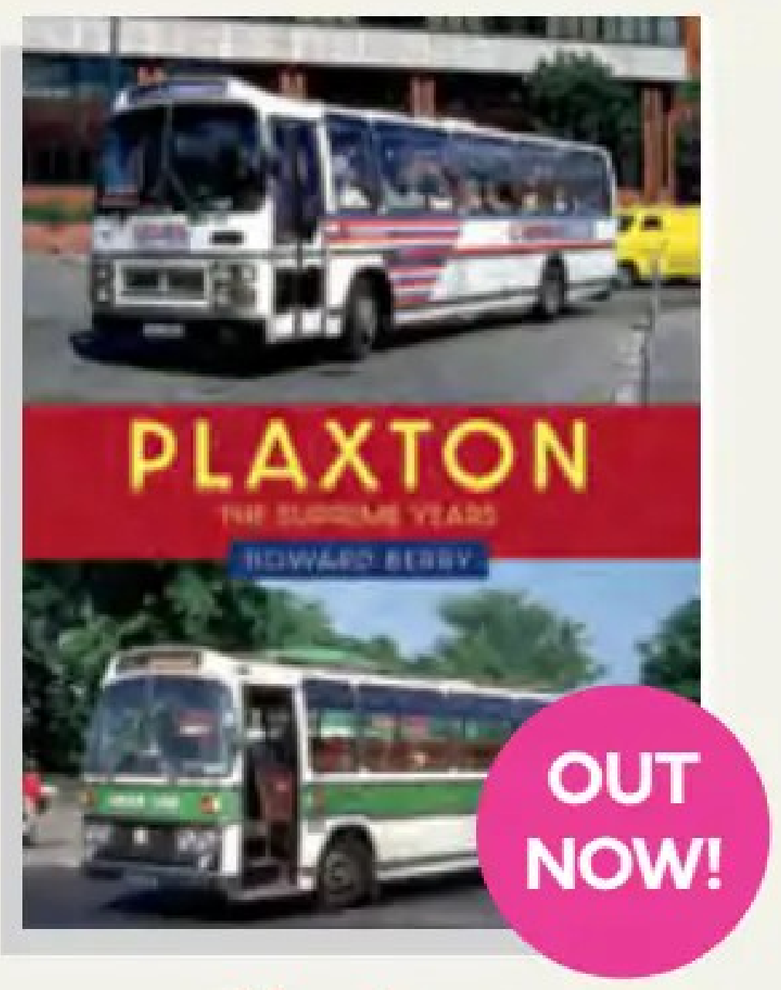
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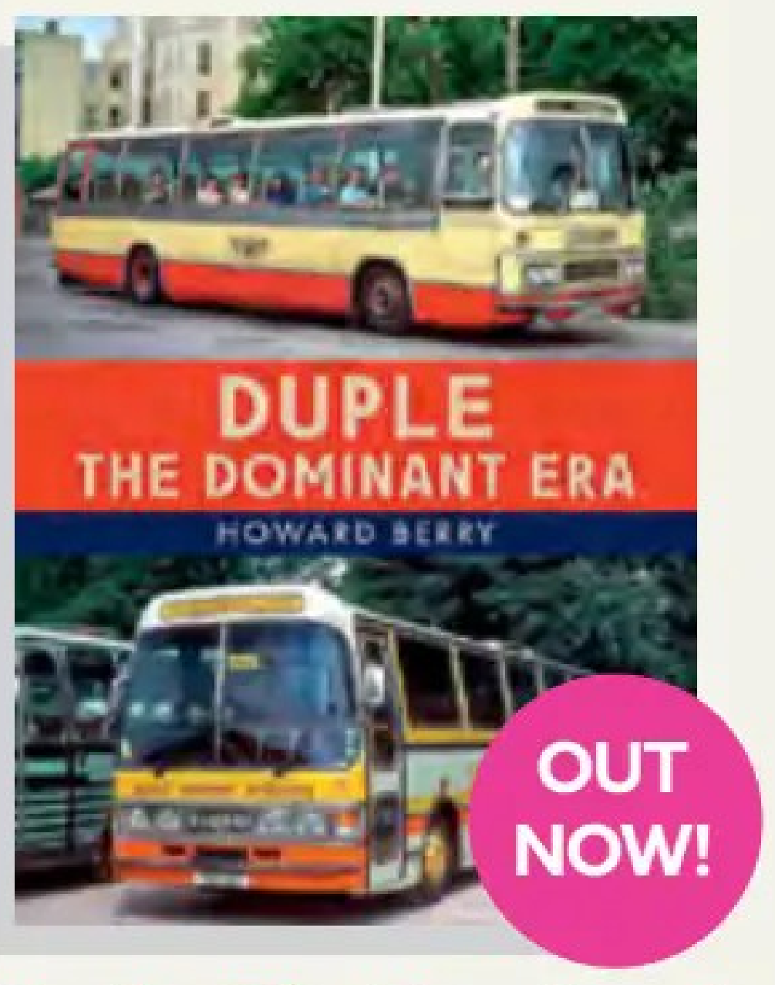
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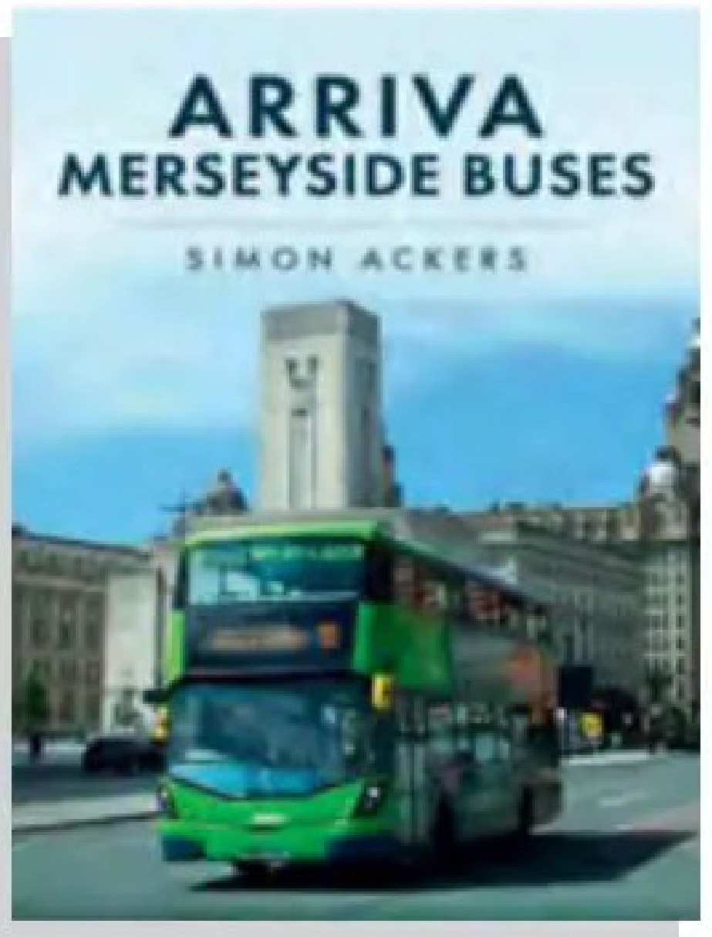
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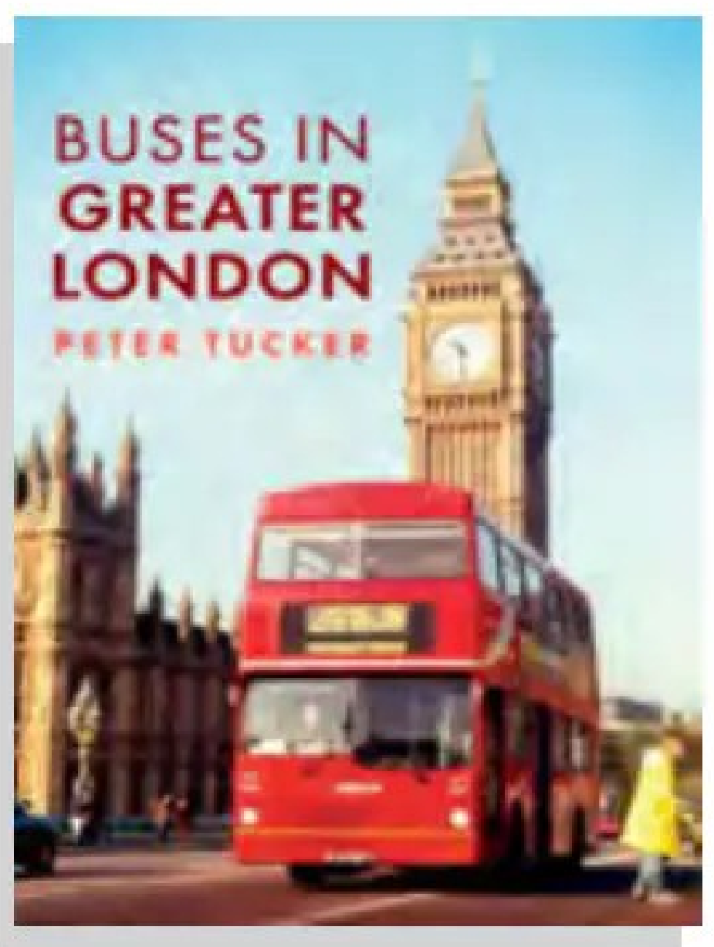
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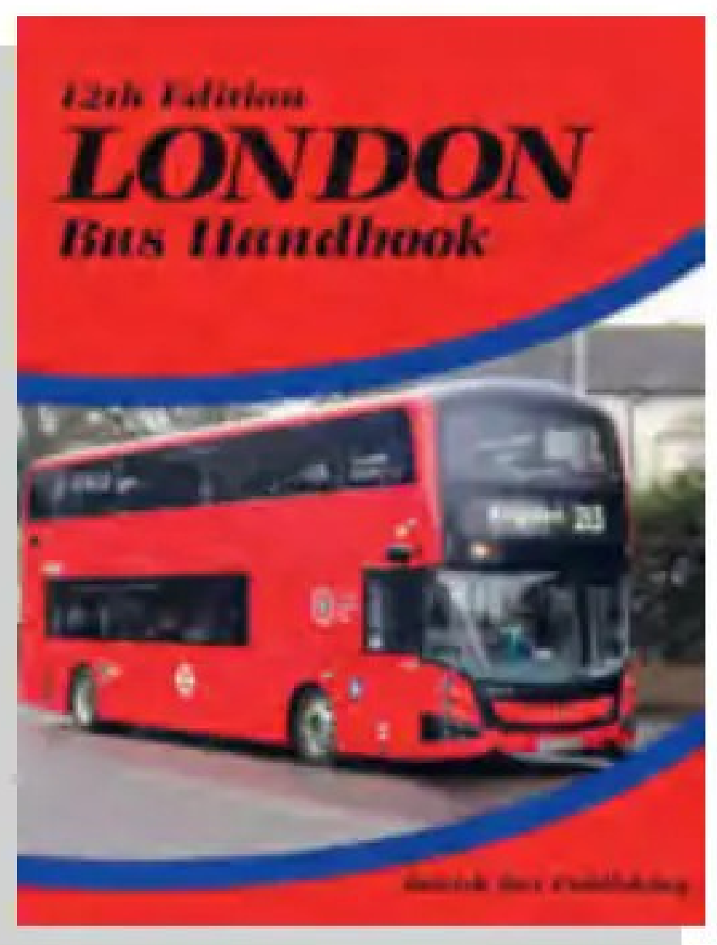
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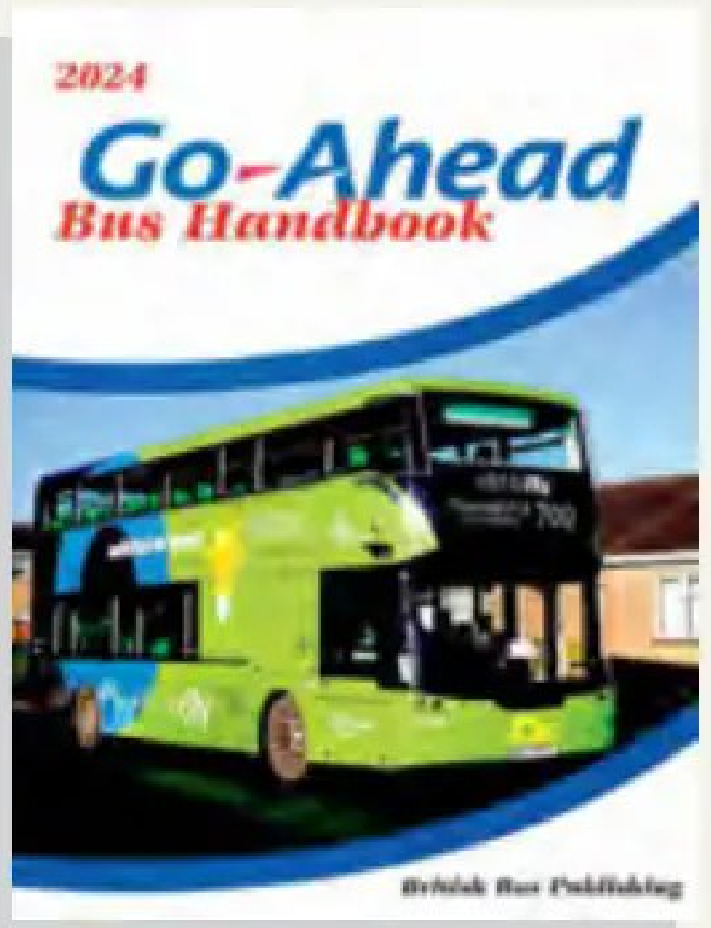
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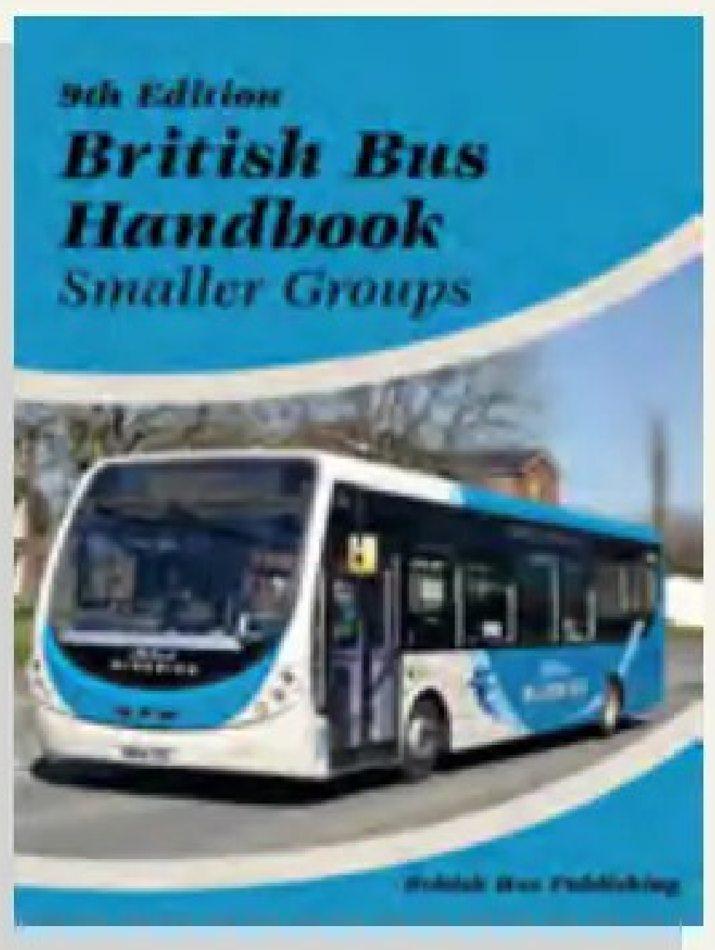

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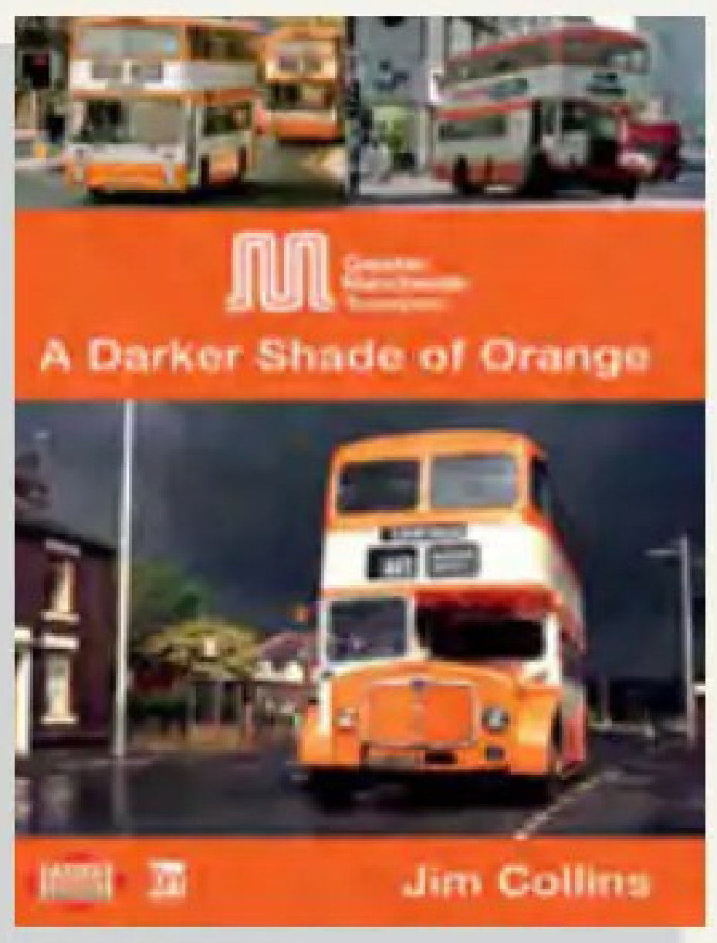

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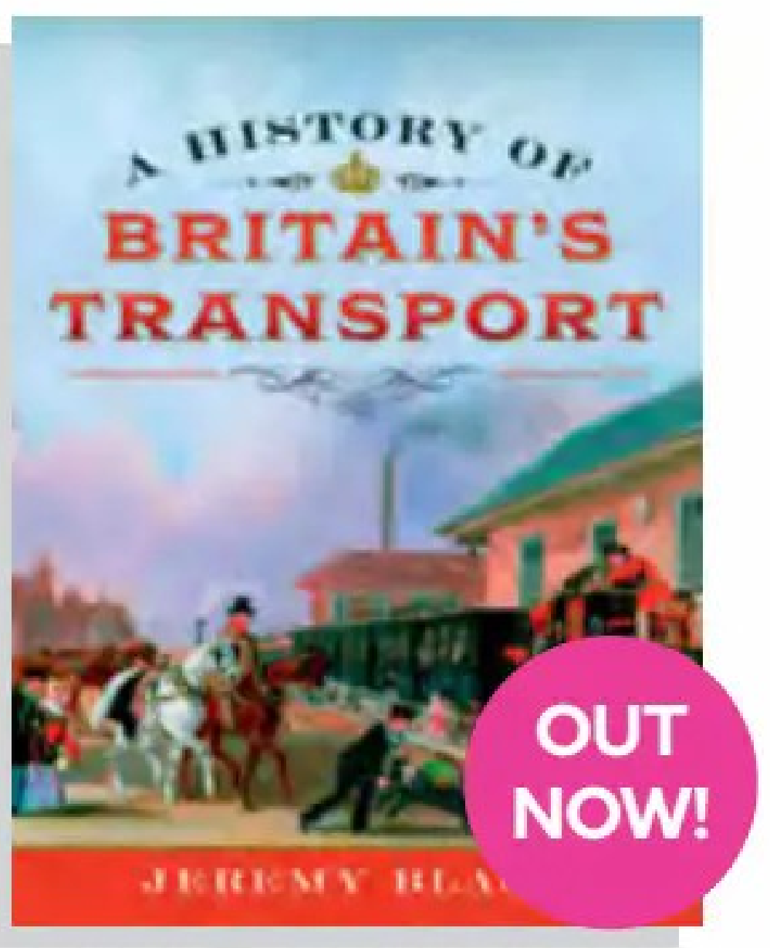

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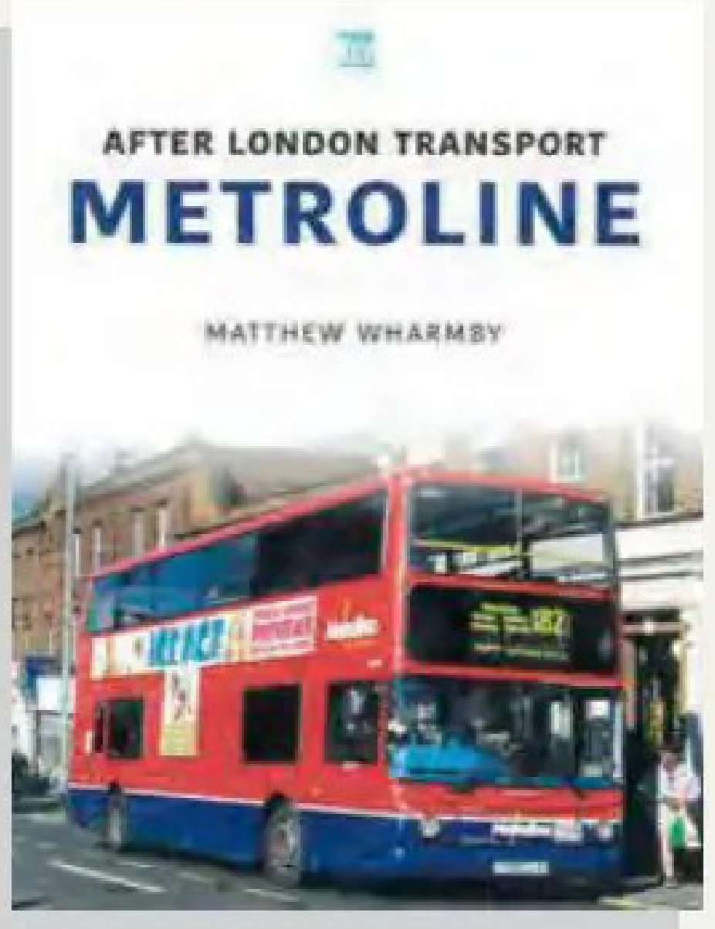

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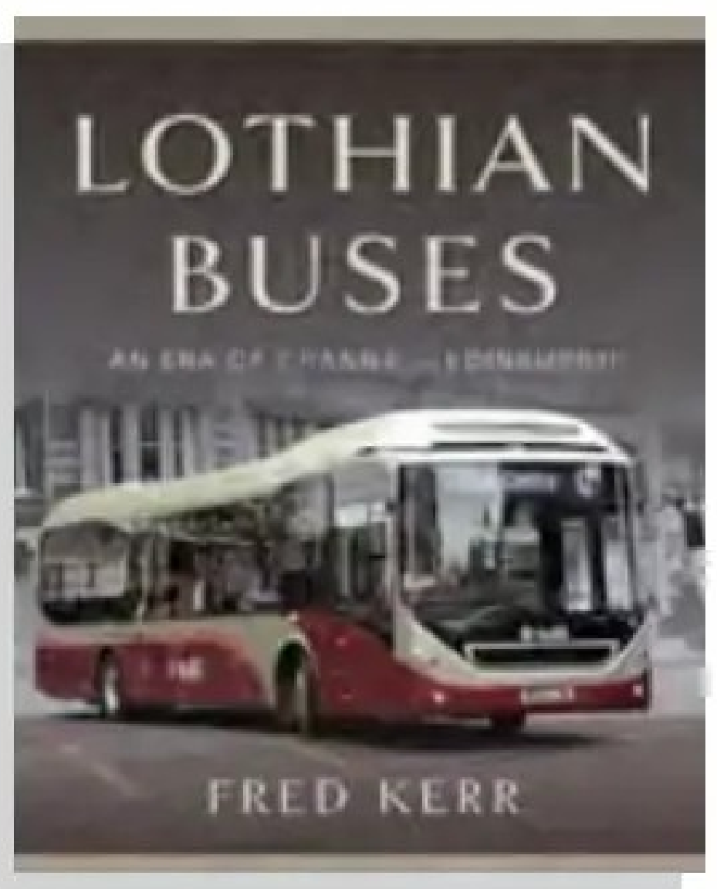

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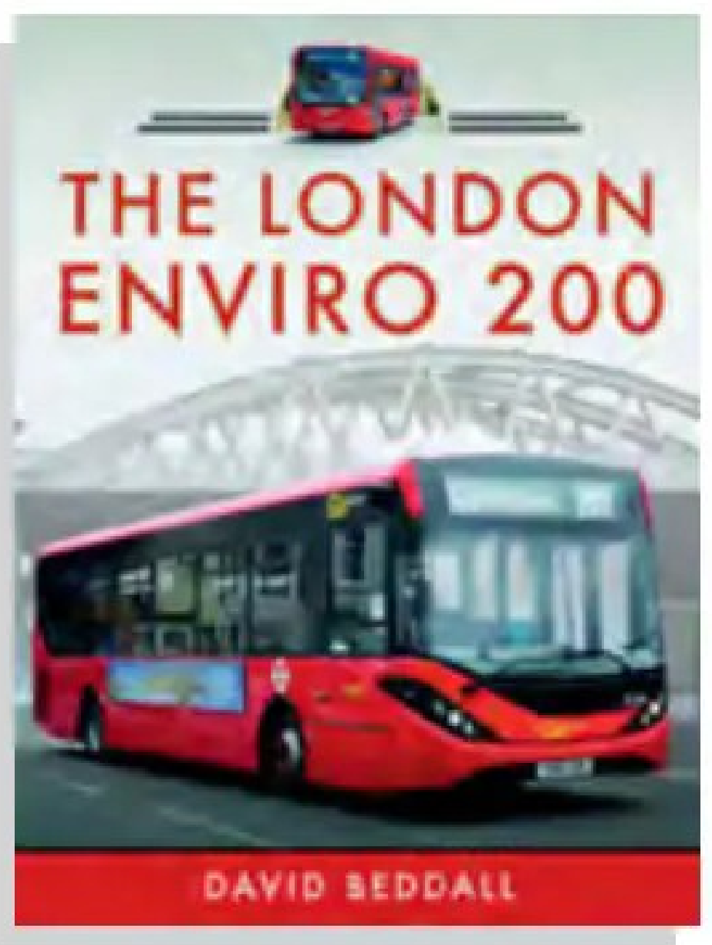

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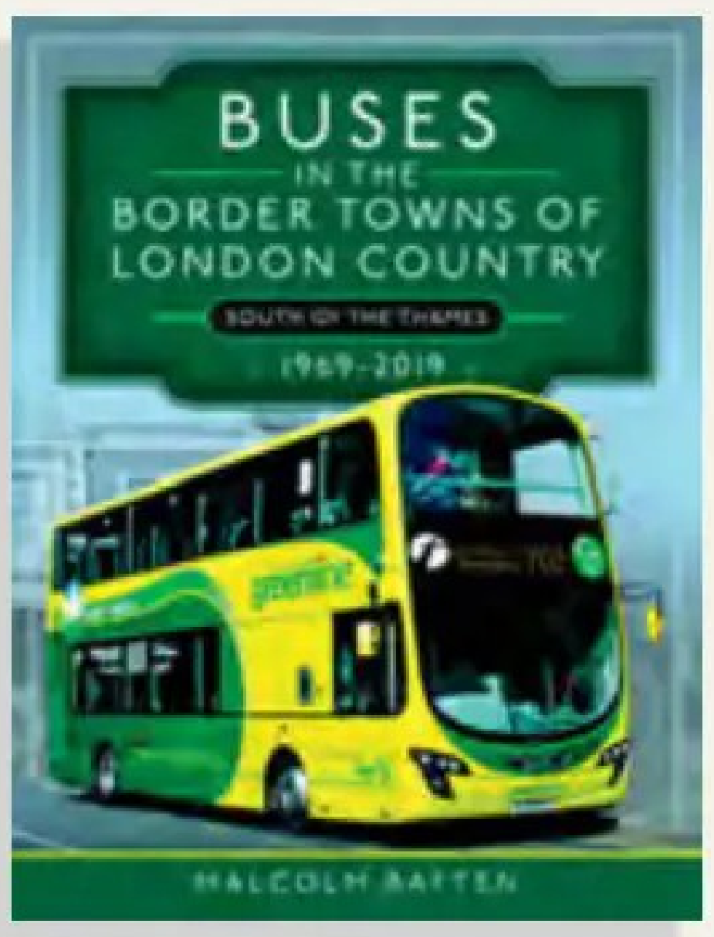

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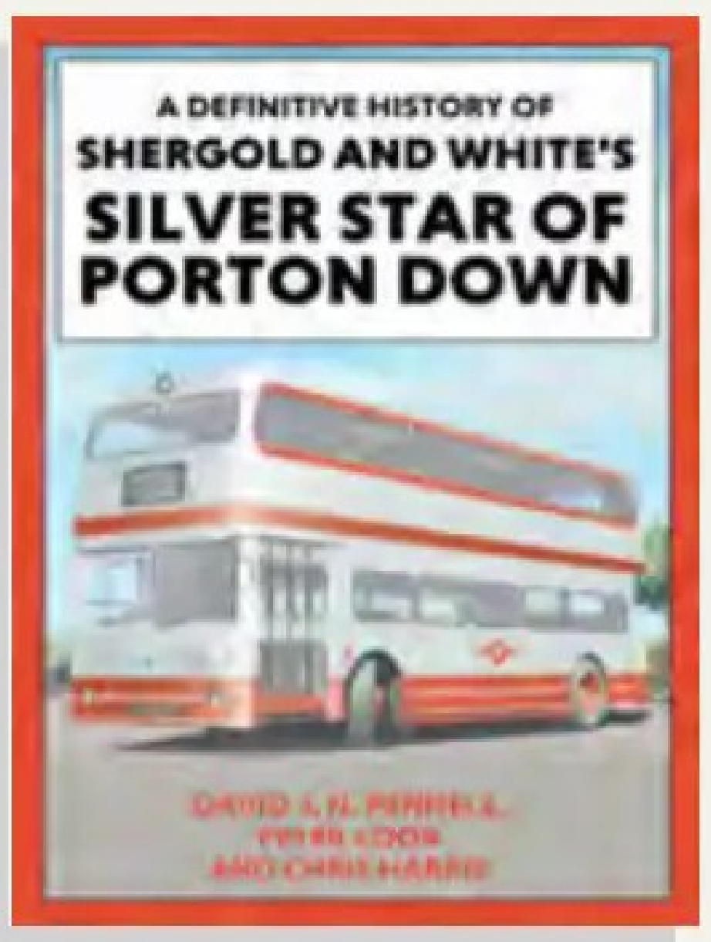

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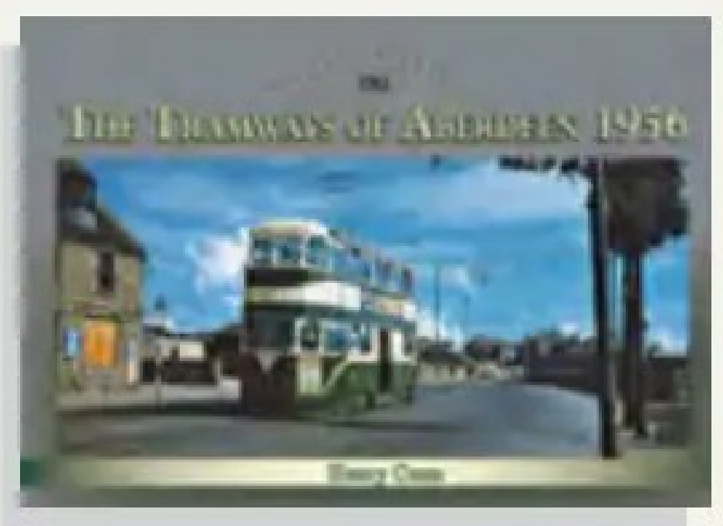

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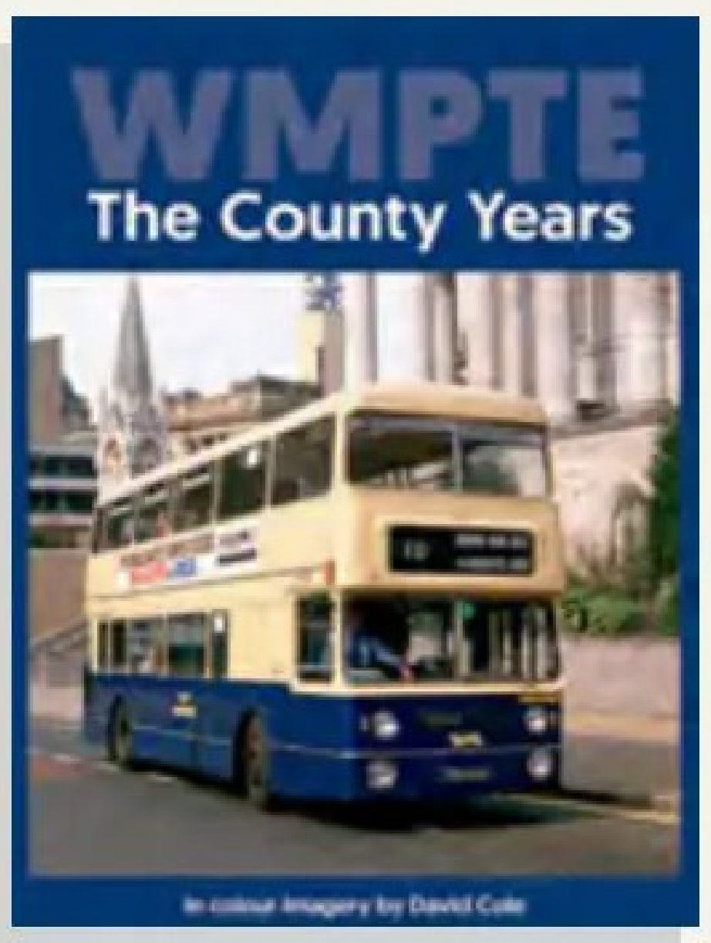

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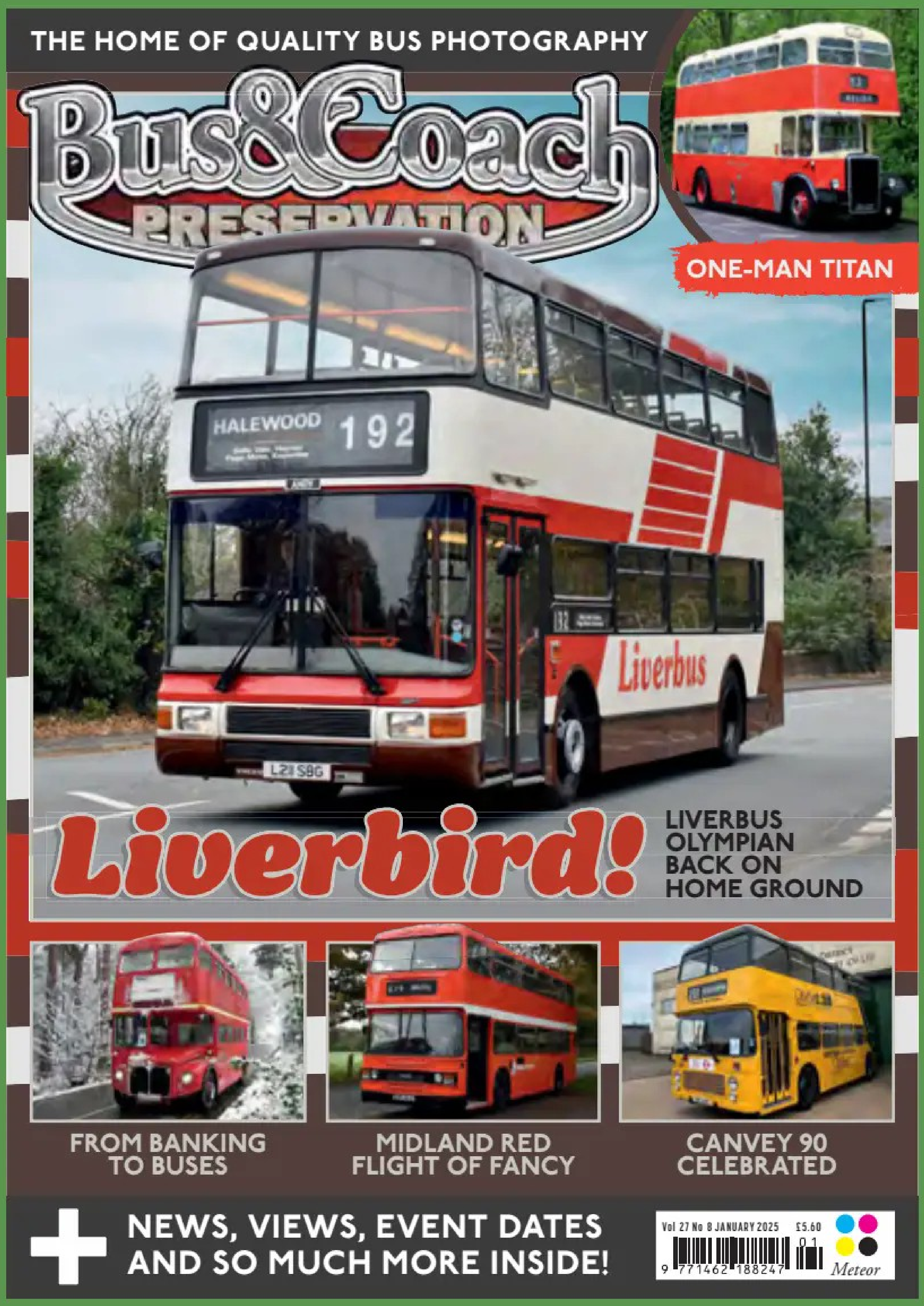
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